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ABSTRACT

Ten papers from a January 1990 conference in Britain on the meaning and implications of autonomy for school learners of second languages address theoretical and practical issues in independent study, learner-controlled instruction, cooperative learning, teacher-student relationship, learner responsibility, students with learning difficulties, and program development and design. The papers include: "Supported Self-Study Across the Curriculum" (Philip Waterhouse); "Autonomy in Language Learning" (David Little); "Learner Autonomy in Practice" (Leni Dam); "Letting Go" (Judith Hamilton); "Autonomy In Our Primary School" (Jane Johnson, Harinder Pardesi, Chris Paine); "Collaborative Learning: Taking the First Steps" (Vee Harris, Gerard Noyau); "First Steps Towards Autonomy for Pupils with Learning Difficulties" (Bernardette Holmes); "Responsibility and Resources" (Vaughan Malcolm); "Flexible Learning North East Modern Languages" (Angela Nichols, Carole Shepherd); and "Developing Reading at Bushfield School" (Ann Swarbrick). (MSE)

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AUTONOMY

IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

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Autonomy in language learning

Papers from a conference
held in January 1990

Edited by Ian Gathercole

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FOREWORD

Alan Moys

CILT

The first CILT conference to explore the meaning and implications of autonomy for school learners of languages was greeted with great enthusiasm by participants, and a request for a more detailed and comprehensive development of the ideas reported in this collection of papers. As this volume goes to press, CILT is making final preparations for a four-day workshop in November 1990, at which 50 of the original participants will work on a practical guide to autonomy in language learning, aimed at school teachers, and to be published by CILT.

In this way, teachers will be able more effectively to help learners ... to become increasingly independent in their own work... to develop strategies for coping with situations not previously encountered... to use a range of sources to get linguistic and factual information... to plan work either alone or with a partner... from quite an early stage, choosing some topic or aspect to be studied (National Curriculum Working Group, Initial Advice).

For many teachers, the goal of greater pupil autonomy may seem a distant one, in a subject area traditionally organised in a strongly teacher-centred way. It is fitting therefore that the way ahead in this field should be mapped by teachers for teachers. CILT's role is to facilitate this process.

INTRODUCTION

Ian Gathercole

Resources for Learning Development Unit, Bristol

'This stood all our teaching on its head' was the response of one participant after the talk given by Leni Dam at the CILT conference held at Lane End, High Wycombe in January 1990. Yet this was not an occasion where experts left one with the feeling that 'it's all very well, but that wouldn't work for me or my kids' (particularly with thirty-two on Monday morning). On the contrary, participants were able to embark on a guided, non-threatening journey of discovery through the complexities of autonomy and its implications, from definitions to full-blown implementation, from discussion groups to practical workshops.

Each of the plenary speakers was refreshingly honest about the problems faced in the move towards greater autonomy. For instance, several references were made to the ultimate challenge of marrying experimental approaches with the pressure to cover so much ground. Unfortunately, many students (and parents) seemed more interested in the passing of exams than in learning for life, while autonomy is perceived by some educationalists as an excuse for messing around. Another challenge for the teacher was that of taking risks. 'Letting go' implies the need for teacher independence - and independence training. Learning to live with one's mistakes, and allowing students to do the same, does not always come easy.

Part I of this collection of papers reflects the main emphasis of the conference. It moves from a clear theoretical perspective to some inspirational examples of current practice. The tone is reassuring. The reader who is anticipating making modest changes, and the one

seeking a more fundamental shift, will both discover sound advice on how autonomy might be developed. Mutual support within a department and school; the sharing of experiences and difficulties; building on the positive, on what already exists locally and nationally; a strong commitment to taking the first steps, whatever the working conditions - these are some of the keystones of such development. Conference members understandably hastened to underline the importance of the rarest commodity, time; time to examine and observe, time to learn and time to ensure that the kind of autonomy proposed is not just an answer to the problem of teacher shortage but a real advance in the learning process.

The theme of supporting 'first steps' is taken up in more detail in Part II. These papers are the product of the conference carousel sessions which deal with specific projects countrywide.

Appendix I looks briefly into resource provision for autonomous learning, an area which is central to the promotion of a stimulating learning environment and the meeting of learners' individual needs.

In Appendix II there is a summary of the findings of the different vocational discussion groups. These are included because they give a clear indication of the obstacles, challenges and opportunities faced by teachers and learners in the 1990s.

Whether autonomy is seen as a total approach to learning or more to do with the provision of suitable resources, the Lane End conference pointed clearly to the **process** which could lead to radical changes in pupil-teacher relationships and methodology. Different models and different emphases were proposed. There were certainly no absolutes.

In anticipation of future developments, the last word should perhaps be left to a pupil who was overheard to say '*Sssh Miss, I'm working!*'

Part I

AUTONOMY IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

SUPPORTED SELF-STUDY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Philip Waterhouse

*formerly Director,
Resources for Learning Development Unit, Bristol*

The goal of 'the autonomous learner'

The ambition is not a new one. There have been countless definitions and exhortations throughout history. Most teachers would accept it as a fundamental goal in education and would declare themselves to be working in that broad direction.

It has to be said however that results, on the whole, have been disappointing. There have been many initiatives and declarations of good intent, but according to HMI, classroom practice has changed only a little. The evidence from HMI is emphatic:

Many lessons indicated that for the majority of pupils learning and teaching in terms both of pace, content and approach, have changed little since 1979. Pupils continued to spend a large part of their time in classrooms listening or writing; in the later years of school the total volume of their written work was usually considerable. Lessons often contained little to help pupils to apply what they had learned beyond the classroom. Successive lessons frequently followed a similar sequence of activities, and this contributed a sense of sameness and predictability to the pattern of the day. The requirements of external examinations and the need to 'cover the syllabus' were frequently advanced by teachers in explanation of the teaching methods which were adopted

However, in more than half the lessons seen in sixth forms students spent a considerable proportion of their time as passive recipients of information:

little opportunity was provided for discussion or the interchange of ideas and they undertook little independent reading and lacked appropriate study strategies.

Secondary Schools: an Appraisal by HMI. HMSO. 1988

What are the reasons for this?

ENVIRONMENTAL REASONS

These have been well enough rehearsed: the pressures of the old-style examinations; large classes; rigid timetables; inadequate resources; insufficient personnel available in support roles for the teacher; uncertainty about what society as a whole was expecting of the education system.

TECHNICAL REASONS

There have been mistakes in the systems of independent learning in recent decades, and many responsible teachers declared themselves neutral until the methods could be demonstrated with greater confidence. There was much rhetoric and insufficient close analysis of how classrooms should be managed with the goals of autonomy in mind. Some of the errors are as follows:

- An assumption that young people could make an instant shift from the teacher dependence of class teaching into a system which demanded them taking full responsibility.
- An assumption that autonomous learning was the same thing as students working **individually** in isolation from their fellow students.
- A neglect of teacher guidance and support for the independent learner, not recognising that it is not enough merely to 'be available'. The young student needs a great deal of help in organising independent work.
- A mistaken belief that in independent learning the teacher has less to do and a less important role.
- An unfortunate equation of independent learning with a more permissive regime.

The hope for the present time

There is much hope that with increasing experience and with the stimulus of government initiatives (TVEI, CPVE, GCSE, and the National Curriculum) present practice is proving to be more soundly based and much more effective. Some of the important characteristics of recent developments are as follows:

- The **teacher-led** small group tutorial. This is the keystone. With a group of about five students the quality of work can be very high. The experience is intellectually stimulating, personally and socially supportive, and the students acquire the skills of negotiation and collaboration.
- Management structures and procedures which are designed to open up the possibilities for the small group tutorial. These focus on the **mutual support** between the small group tutorial on the one hand and the student's independent work on the other. The small group tutorial is the means whereby the students receive clear briefing and advance support for their independent work. And when they can work independently they are creating the opportunity for the teacher to concentrate more on the small group tutorial.
- A recognition that the small group tutorial is not easily achieved in the large classes of the lower school. Here the tutorial has to be developed over a period of time; instant breakthrough is unlikely. Teachers who use a wide range of active learning techniques together with a developing emphasis on the role of permanent or semi-permanent 'teams' within whole class teaching are making the breakthrough. The immediate objective is to gain more **discretionary time** for the teacher so that small group tutorials can begin to grow. This is the key issue for classroom management.
- A recognition of the need for skillful differentiation within classroom work. The National Curriculum may well help to bring a wider range of differentiated resources into the classroom. At the same time teachers need to build up banks of differentiated tasks and activities and to practise the skills of using the small group tutorial as the main vehicle for differentiated guidance.

AUTONOMY IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

Some theoretical and practical considerations

David Little

*Centre for Language and Communication Studies
Trinity College, Dublin*

What is learner autonomy?

FIVE NEGATIVES

- Autonomy is **not** a synonym for self-instruction; in other words, autonomy is **not** limited to learning without a teacher.
- In the classroom context, autonomy does **not** entail an abdication of responsibility on the part of the teacher; it is **not** a matter of letting the learners get on with things as best they can.
- On the other hand, autonomy is **not** something that teachers do to learners; that is, it is **not** another teaching method.
- Autonomy is **not** a single, easily described behaviour.
- Autonomy is **not** a steady state achieved by learners.

A PROVISIONAL DEFINITION

Learner autonomy is essentially a matter of the learner's psychological relation to the process and content of learning. We recognise it in a wide variety of behaviours as a capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making, and independent action. The various freedoms that autonomy implies are always conditional and constrained, never absolute. As social beings our independence is always balanced by dependence, our essential condition is one of interdependence; total detachment is a principal determining feature not of autonomy but of autism.

Approaches to autonomy in language learning

GENERAL EDUCATIONAL ARGUMENTS FOR AUTONOMY

If democratic states are to develop and flourish as democracies, they must undertake educational measures calculated to develop the capacity of their citizens to think and act as free and self-determining individuals (see Holec 1981). We cannot expect children and adolescents to mature into autonomous adults if we do not give them the opportunity to behave autonomously as they learn.

PSYCHOLOGICAL ARGUMENTS FOR AUTONOMY

Each of us learns by assimilating new information in terms of what he or she already knows (cp. Barnes 1976, Britton 1972, Kelly 1963; also Schank & Abelson 1977, Anderson & Pearson 1984). Arguably, then, the most efficient learners will be those who know how to bring their existing knowledge to bear on each new learning task - in other words, who have developed a degree of psychological autonomy.

Classroom learning involves two kinds of interaction: the internal psychological interaction between new and existing knowledge, and the external social interaction by which new knowledge is mediated and learners can negotiate their way towards new meanings. Pedagogical measures calculated to promote learner autonomy within the social dimension will certainly support, but they may also in turn actually promote, the development of autonomy within the psychological dimension.

AUTONOMY AND SUCCESSFUL LANGUAGE USE

If language learners are to be efficient communicators in their target language, they must be autonomous to the extent of having sufficient independence, self-reliance and self-confidence to fulfil the variety of social, psychological and discourse roles in which they will be cast. This entails being aware of the socio-pragmatic requirements of the different situations in which they are called upon to use the target language; sensitive to the varying psychological relations they will have to the different persons with whom they must communicate; and capable equally of taking initiatives in communication and responding to the initiatives of others.

Genuinely communicative approaches recognise that it is not enough to **teach** by **telling** and **showing**; we must create the conditions in which our learners can **learn** by **doing**, that is, by **communicating**. It is thus a fundamental requirement of the communicative classroom that it should be capable of accommodating a wide variety of discourse types in order that learners have the opportunity of filling the widest possible variety of discourse roles **as they learn**. Of course, this kind of flexibility follows naturally from the practice of genuine learner-centredness.

AUTONOMY, LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND LANGUAGE PROCESSING
Research into first language acquisition has highlighted the importance of interaction between the child and its parents, siblings, care givers, and so on. But it has also shown that the units of a language are acquired in a predictable order and that the child moves from one stage of acquisition to the next only when it is ready to do so. In the sense that its progress is only partly determined by environmental stimuli of one kind or another, the child acquiring its first language enjoys a degree of autonomy. This is not to say that the child exercises conscious control over the acquisition process; but it is to say that vital transitions in first language development occur when the child is ready, and not when its parents (for example) say they should.

These facts have two lessons for second and foreign language teachers:

- They should remind us that there is a crucial sense in which all learning is internal to the learner. However much we consult with our learners about learning targets and how best to achieve them, and however flexible we are in the way we arrange the furniture and organise the discourse of our classrooms, we cannot control what goes on inside each learner's head. What is more, learners require time and psychological space in which to learn; and if we are too insistently interventionist in our pedagogical practice we can all too easily deprive them of that time and space.
- Like children learning their first language, learners of second and foreign languages follow predictable routes of acquisition. Research evidence seems to suggest that pedagogical intervention can provide an important underpinning for natural acquisition processes (for an accessible account of relevant research findings,

see Littlewood 1984); but as with all learning, so with language acquisition, the teacher's influence stops a long way short of being absolute. Thus again, the most successful learners will be those who have developed sufficient autonomy (in my original psychological definition) to allow those processes free rein.

The development of literacy skills entails the development of the capacity to plan, monitor and edit discourse - the capacity to produce texts of various kinds via internal and only partly recoverable processes of interaction with oneself. Planning, monitoring and editing depend on detachment - in this case from language itself and from the emerging linguistic product. They are thus another aspect of the successful language user's autonomy. For language users who are also language learners, the reflective processes that planning, monitoring and editing embody are a means of providing crucial conscious support for the essentially unconscious processes of acquisition.

Autonomy in two contrasting learning contexts

Autonomy can manifest itself in a great variety of ways. This is because the freedoms it entails are always conditional and constrained by the various factors that determine the context in which it arises. Accordingly, if we want to promote learner autonomy in our particular environment, we need to be aware of the conditions and constraints that will define the limits of what can be achieved.

AUTONOMOUS LEARNING OUTSIDE THE FULL-TIME EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Adults learning outside the full-time educational system in order to fulfil some precise personal or professional need will set their own learning targets and decide when sufficient learning has taken place. Because their needs are precise, they may well not be met by conventional learning materials, in which case they will have to collect materials of their own - in all probability authentic materials. They will then have to decide how to go about learning from such materials. and it will be up to them to organise their learning so that it fits in with all their other commitments.

Such learners clearly enjoy at least the possibility of autonomy in every aspect of their learning. But like all learners, they are by definition inexperienced in relation to their learning targets, so that they are likely to need guidance of various kinds. For this reason, most schemes designed to promote autonomous language learning among adults are founded on a combination of learning resources and learner counselling (for a discussion of some of the fundamental issues, see Riley (ed.) 1985 and Little (ed.) 1989; for a case study, see Little & Grant 1986). Learner counselling aims to help learners achieve an ever-clearer understanding of why they are learning, what they are learning, and how they are learning.

AUTONOMOUS LEARNING WITHIN THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

For those inside the system it can easily appear that there are so many constraints, so many factors over which learners (and teachers) have no control, that learner autonomy is impossible. But to take such a view is to fall into the trap of confusing autonomy with self-instruction, to identify its freedoms exclusively with external matters of organisation, and to forget that autonomy is essentially a matter of the psychological relation between the learner and the content and process of learning.

Teachers enjoy - and will continue to enjoy - a large measure of freedom, first in interpreting the aims of the syllabus, then in deciding how best to fulfil them in terms of content and method. The question is, are they prepared to share this freedom with their pupils?

Practical issues in the implementation of autonomy

THE TEACHER

It is not easy for teachers to change their role from purveyor of information to counsellor and manager of learning resources. It is not easy for teachers to stop talking: after all, if they stop talking they stop teaching, and if they stop teaching, their learners may stop learning. And it is not easy for teachers to let learners solve problems for themselves; for that takes time, and there is always so much ground to cover. Committing oneself to learner autonomy requires a lot of nerve.

THE LEARNER

Autonomy - accepting responsibility for their own learning - may be the last thing learners want. In many cases their chief interest is in acquitting themselves well in the exams, and it may be difficult to shake their belief that the teacher's job is straightforwardly to prepare them for that end. This can be a problem especially with more able pupils, who tend to feel comfortable in a state of more or less total dependence provided their efforts are duly rewarded.

We should not be surprised if some learners are resistant to autonomy; for autonomy implies a continuous challenge to our certainties, and that can be very unsettling. But always it will be the autonomous learners who most easily make the transition from learner to learner/user of the target language.

DETERMINING THE CONTENT OF LEARNING

Conventional language course books can certainly be used in the autonomous classroom, but they are too constraining to serve as the sole focus of learning. For one thing, autonomous learners must be able to range freely in their choice of learning materials and learning tasks; for another, classroom discourse arising from language teaching materials has a strong tendency to focus on issues of grammar and interactional structure, so that whatever meaning gets communicated is always filtered through a concern for form (see Devitt 1989). By contrast, non-pedagogical language use always gives meaning priority over form.

The individual and group project work that forms a central part of learning activity in any autonomous classroom, finds its most satisfactory focus in authentic materials, e.g. the *Authentic* newspapers and cassettes, all kinds of printed material, radio, satellite television. But learning activities in the autonomous classroom also need to be supported by some kind of resource centre that embraces the spoken as well as the written language and ideally is equipped with audio, video and computer technologies (for discussion on how to establish and run such a centre, see Little (ed.) 1989).

LEARNING HOW TO LEARN

It is essential to the development of autonomy that learners become aware of themselves as learners - aware, for example, of the

learning techniques they instinctively favour and capable of judging how effective those techniques are. Successful autonomous learning schemes in Scandinavia have found a solution in the learner's journal, in which each learner keeps an individual record of the learning undertaken and assesses how well or badly particular tasks have been done.

But journals are not enough in themselves. Learners will need to be helped to a greater understanding of the learning processes in which they are involved. The supplement to the September 1989 issue of the *Authentik* newspapers provides various kinds of information not usually put in the way of learners; while Gail Ellis and Barbara Sinclair's *Learning to learn English* (1989) contains a wealth of practical ideas that can easily be adapted for learners of other languages.

Conclusion

Learner autonomy is not easy to achieve, and for that reason alone it poses a very great challenge to teachers. Yet it is a challenge we must respond to positively. In general, autonomous learners are defined by the fact that they can integrate what they learn with the rest of what they are. In the special case of second and foreign languages, this process of integration means that autonomous learners are in the fullest sense users of the language they are learning. It is through autonomy that our learners will fulfil the communicative aims of their second or foreign language curricula. Perhaps more important in the broader educational perspective, it is through autonomy that they will learn to be 'the artists of their own lives' (Ignatieff 1990).

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LEARNER AUTONOMY IN PRACTICE

An experiment in learning and teaching

Leni Dam

Denmark

What is learner autonomy?

Autonomy is when the learner is willing to and capable of taking charge of his own learning, i.e. independently:

- choosing aims and purposes
- choosing materials, methods and tasks
- exercising choice and purpose in organising and carrying out the chosen tasks
- choosing criteria for evaluation and using them in evaluation

(Henry Holec, 1983)

EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES DERIVED FROM THE CONCEPT OF AUTONOMY:

- *autonomy means independence (programmed learning)*
- *autonomy means the active exercise of learner responsibility*
autonomy is the means: (what and how within fixed objectives)
- *autonomy means the ability to learn*
- *autonomy is the aim and the means (why, what, how the learner learns to learn)*

(Council of Europe: Autonomy and self-directed learning:
present fields of application, Strasbourg, 1988)

Learner autonomy is characterised by a readiness to take charge of one's own learning in the service of one's needs and purposes. This entails a capacity and willingness to act independently and in cooperation with others, as a social responsible person.

COMMENTS

An autonomous learner is an active participant in the social processes of learning, but also an active interpreter of new information in terms of what she/he already and uniquely knows. It is essential that an autonomous learner is stimulated to evolve an awareness of the aims and processes of learning and is capable of the critical reflection which syllabuses and curricula frequently require but traditional pedagogical measures rarely achieve.

In both teacher-training and classroom contexts, attempts to operationalise learner autonomy typically begin by emphasising the need for teachers and learners jointly to accept the freedom to determine the content of learning. Experience suggests that this freedom can be sustained and validated only by developing in the learner an awareness of why he or she has chosen particular learning contents and aims and a capacity to evaluate what has been learned, how effectively it has been learned, and how one should proceed in the future.

(This attempt to characterise the concept of autonomy - what, why, how - was made at a conference on autonomy in Bergen, 1989, by Rigmor Ericsson and June Miliander, Sweden; Turid Trebbi, Norway; David Little, Ireland, and Leni Dam, Denmark.)

Why autonomy?

Greater influence/responsibility on the part of the learners in planning and in conducting teaching/learning activities will lead to a greater degree of active involvement and better learning in the actual teaching/learning situation, which again will influence the learner's potential for evaluating the process.

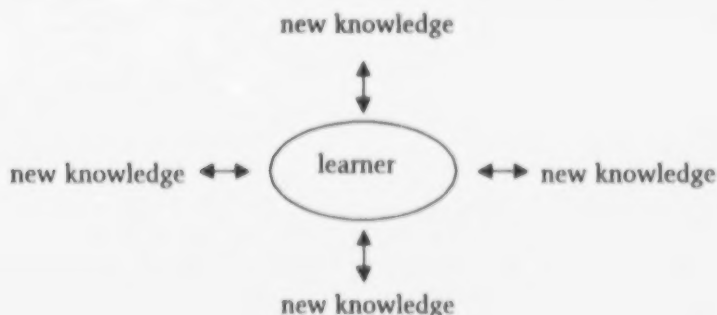
School knowledge is the knowledge which someone else presents to us. We partly grasp it, enough to answer the teacher's question, to do exercises, or to answer examination questions, but it remains someone

else's knowledge, not ours. If we never use this knowledge we probably forget it. In so far as we use knowledge for our own purposes, however, we begin to incorporate it into our view of the world, and to use parts of it to cope with the exigencies of living.

(Barnes, 1976:81)

To learn is to develop a relationship between what the learner knows already and the new system presented to him, and this can only be done by the learner himself.

(Barnes, 1976)



No school, or even university, can provide its pupils with all the knowledge and the skills they will need in their adult lives. Adult life, in its personal as well as its conventional aspects, is far too diverse and too subject to change for any educational curriculum to attempt to provide a detailed preparation. It is more important for a young person to have an understanding of himself/herself, an awareness of the environment and its workings, and to have learned how to think and how to learn.

(John Trim, 1988)

Our society of today makes great demands on communication. This applies to the social use of language as well as the need to obtain the necessary knowledge and education through language. It is therefore of vital importance that the learner doesn't regard himself/herself as a loser when learning a language but instead consciously tries to gain a

genuine knowledge of his/her possibilities for learning (languages) independently.

(Gerd Gabrielsen, 1984)

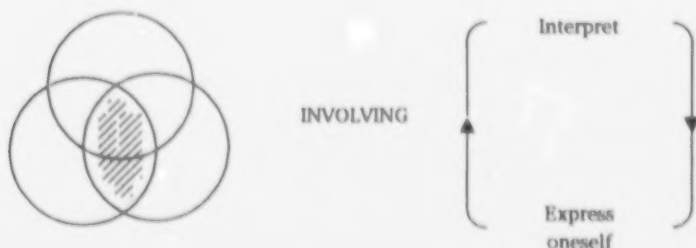
How autonomy?

Language learning is the development of communicative competence, the capacity to communicate; i.e.

the development of the learner's knowledge of communication/
learning

the development of the learner's communicative abilities -
interpretation and expression

Communicative competence in a second or third language thus represents a further development of the learner's first-language competence.



Learning to learn (the development of learner autonomy) is the development of the learner's awareness and consciousness of the process of (language) learning.

Negotiation, planning, and evaluation of learning objectives and activities are basic elements in the process of learning.

LEARNING TO LEARN - COMMUNICATION

The aim is LEARNER AUTONOMY -
LEARNER AUTONOMY is the only means possible

The Danish experiment

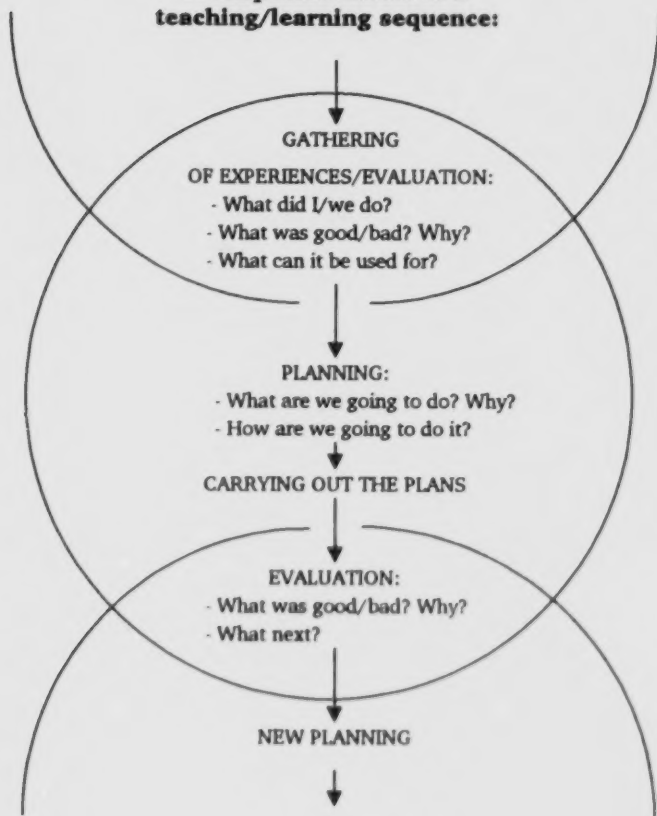
AIMS

- To introduce strategies for taking advantage of all the learning opportunities offered by the school and by the external environment
- to induce the ability to learn and to assess oneself as learner
- to bring about an awareness of the nature and relative significance of the roles of learner, co-learner and teacher in the teaching/learning process.

METHODS:

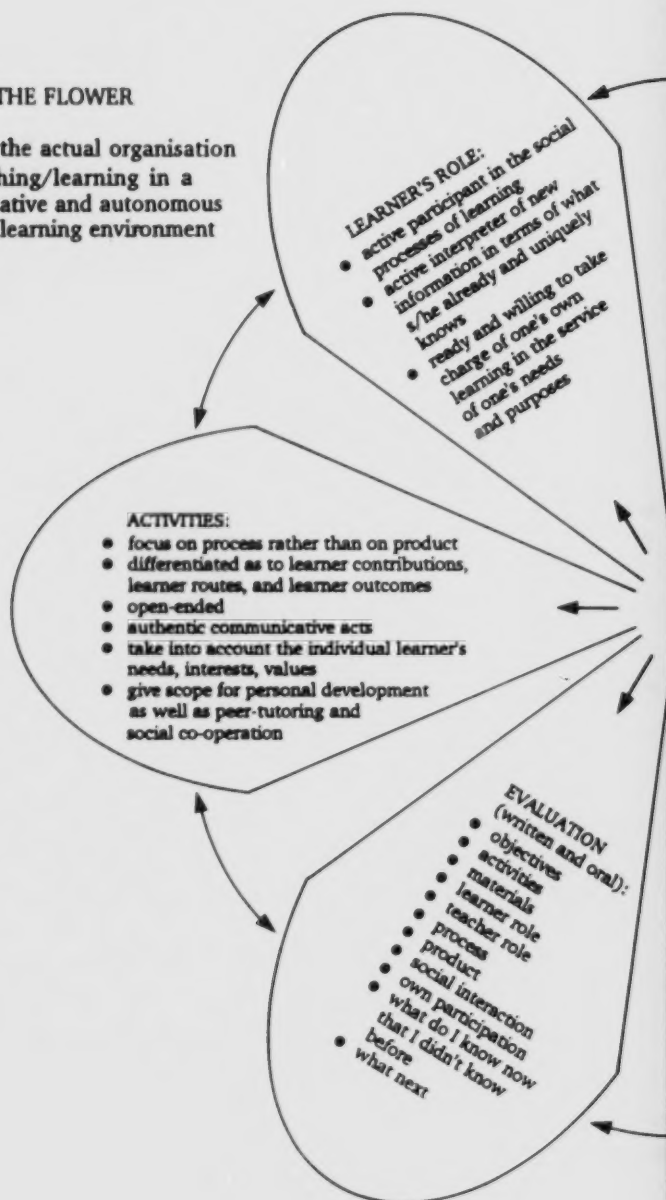
- Participation by the pupils in decisions concerning the preparation, conduct and assessment of the learning programme
- learners and teachers discuss and determine the purpose of the next stage in the teaching/learning process
- the learners choose the supporting materials and decide how they are to be used
- the teacher observes, takes part in, and analyses the conduct of the programme selected
- the teacher interprets these observations in terms of suggestions for the organisation of the next stage
- learners and teachers assess the work carried out (acquisition and participation)
- the learners assign their personal objectives
- learners and teachers determine the following stage.

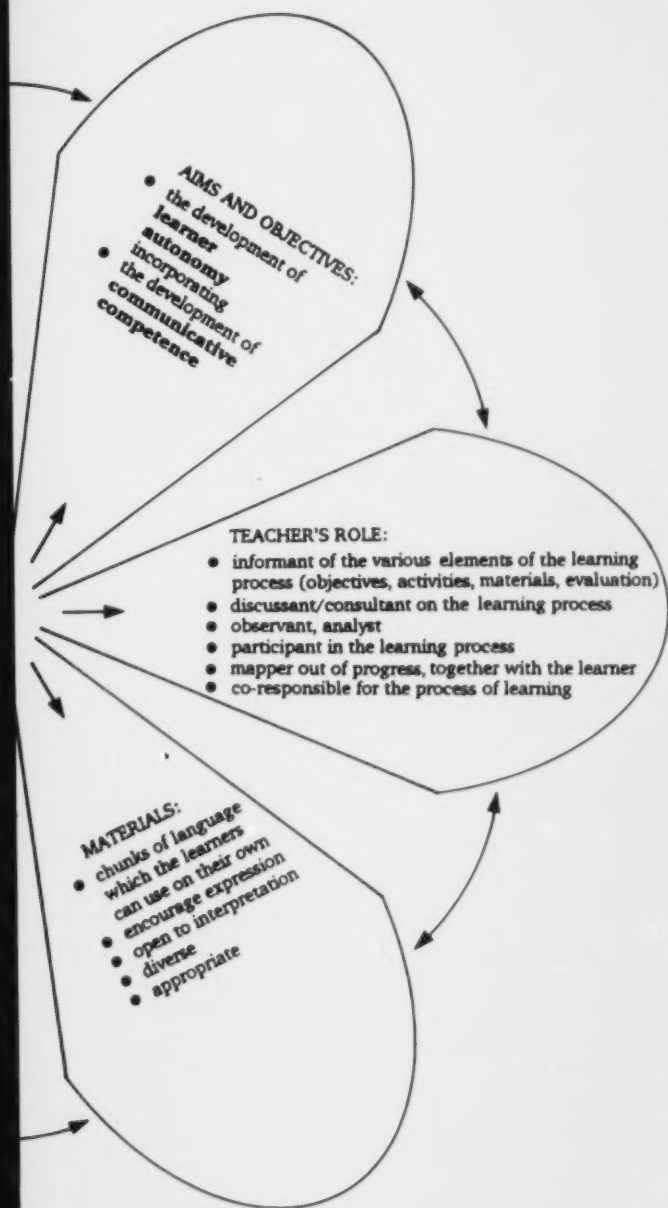
**A simplified model of a
teaching/learning sequence:**



THE FLOWER

Elements in the actual organisation
of teaching/learning in a
communicative and autonomous
language learning environment





PROBLEMS/CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED WHEN DEVELOPING LEARNER AUTONOMY

- to make the pupils ask WHY
- to remember myself to ask WHY
- to make the pupils make decisions
- to make the pupils take over responsibility for their decisions
- to respect the pupils' right to make 'wrong' decisions, and learn from it (both parts)
- to become better at listening to and understanding what the pupils are saying
- to find the best way of supporting the pupils in their choice of learning programme
- to build up respect for the participants (pupils and teacher) in the classroom
- to facilitate groupwork among pupils who have never worked in groups before
- to find 'the best way' of supporting the need of the pupils to keep track of the work done and progress made
- to define the 'spine' of 'what is going on' to pupils, parents, others
- to cope with the 'Octopus Syndrome' (a feeling of being everywhere and nowhere)
- to spend too much time on one 'problem' at the cost of other 'problems'.

SUCSESSES ENCOUNTERED WHEN DEVELOPING LEARNER AUTONOMY

- responsibility (of own/others' learning)
- cooperation
- awareness (of needs, learning, etc.)
- interest
- engagement
- motivation
- eager to work
- fond of working
- decision-making
- joint participation
- negotiation/discussion
- to use oneself
- being creative

Evaluation sheet for November/December

Name: Tomas Larsen Working with: Martin, Tina D. Dorte

Subject/Area: Making Newspaper

Materials used: "Allan Simonsen", "Vi unge", "Times", Danish newspapers

Good things (remember why):

We were a good group and worked very ^{well} good, because we were all at the same level. We helped each other very much even though we ~~split~~^{split} up in two groups. We learned also a lot of good words and sentences. We ~~was~~^{were} very concentrated and that was very important. I think our newspaper was very good, and that was maybe because we ~~was~~ so concentrated.

Bad things (WHY):

In the beginning we ~~wasn't~~^{were} very concentrated with our homework.

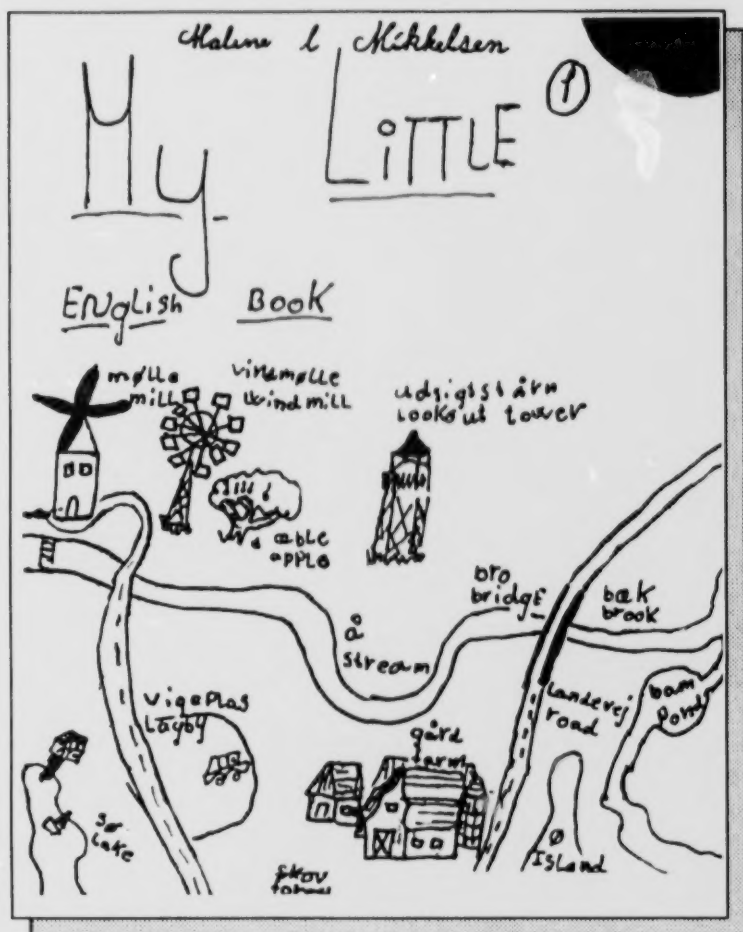
What do I know now that I didn't know before:

I know that English isn't that difficult to translate to Danish and Danish isn't that difficult to translate to English. It helps a lot.

Plans/suggestions for the future:

I'd like to make a group out of the four of us again. And then we can discuss what to do.

USEFUL TOOLS WHEN LEARNING TO LEARN



Extracts from learner diaries - 1st year of English

Evaluation sheets

Activity:

Name:

Successes:

Why:

Problems:

How did you solve them:

What do I know now/can I do now that I didn't know/couldn't do before:

What do you want to do next:

Why:

A SIMPLIFIED MODEL OF LANGUAGE LEARNING INCORPORATING THE LEARNERS' EXPERIENCED ACTIVITIES:



A CONTRACT: AN AGREEMENT MADE BETWEEN THE TEACHER
AND THE LEARNERS TO AVOID CHAOS OR FRUSTRATION.

THE TEN 'COMMANDMENTS'

1. I want to talk to you at least once a week.
2. Speak as much English as you possibly can.
3. Be prepared for every lesson so that you know what you are going to do. Otherwise you'll easily waste time.
4. Every lesson starts with an introduction by me. Maybe I want to recommend a book or tell about a film, programme, etc.
5. Every lesson ends with you writing down what you've done this lesson and what homework you're going to do for the next lesson. Homework can also be going to the library to get English books.
6. Please, have an alternative in case things go wrong.
7. Tape-recorders are not toys.
8. It's your responsibility that you do something useful in every lesson. Make sure you don't always choose the same activity.
9. Make sure you've booked tape-recorders, rooms, special books beforehand. Give me a note with your name and wish.
If too many people wish to book a room or a tape-recorder at the same time you may need your alternative.
10. Ask at least three others before you ask me.

AWARENESS OF LEARNING AS EXPRESSED BY THE LEARNERS

The following examples of written data from classrooms, collected over the years, show how learners will often express themselves, when/if asked:

Why do I learn English?

“

- for travelling
- world language
- learn something
- it is fun
- be able to talk to people from other countries
- can teach my mother English
- can answer back when the older ones address you in English
- so that younger brothers and sisters cannot understand secrets

”

How do I learn English?

“

- work with English
- write a lot of English
- do a lot of homework
- by talking, reading, and writing a lot of English
- by making cartoons, diary, stories, plays
- by using a dictionary
- by asking parents, sisters and brothers, friends, and the teacher

- by talking a lot of English at home and at school
- by watching English films and reading the text

”

(Beginning of first year of English)

What do I want to do this year?

“

I want to speak more English and I'd like to spell better than I do now. I would like to work with another boy or girl who is willing to speak English with me and make some activities in English. Materials: Challenge to think and crosswords.

I would like to get a more varied language and I would like to be better at spelling, especially the words used in everyday situations. How: I will prepare 'two minutes' talk' for every lesson, I will write down new words five times and practise pronouncing them. I will get someone or myself to correct it. I will read at least two books - difficult ones - and make book-reviews.

”

(Beginning of term - 4th year of English)

What was good? bad? why?

“

I think that 'play games with English' was the best thing that I have made in my school year because I have learned a lot of new words e.g.

cabbage	biscuits	pie
record-player	traffic-warden	guitar
piano	heavy	serve
magazines	wallpaper	
decorator and so on.		

I have to learn strong words of play 'meet the family'

office heavy parcel clothe yourself

- and I can read and understand all their books we have in class - not them with horse.

”

(End of term - 1st year of English)

What do you feel that you know now that you didn't know before?

“

I think that we have grown better at planning our own time. We know more about what we need to do and how to go about it. We try all the time to extend our vocabulary and to get an active

language. Evaluation also helped us. It is like going through things again.

”

How did I cope in England?

- A. How did I cope in England with my English? a) Well b) Poorly
B. How am I going to use these experiences in my English lessons?

“

- Well:** When I was talking to my host alone.
When I was shopping.
The second time I went to school.
On the youth hotel in London (in the evening).
- Poorly:** The first day when I heard their english.
The first day I arrived in London.
The first day I went to Spurley hey high school (because I did'nt know anybody).
I did'nt understand if they talked too fast to each other.
- How?:** Try to listen to some fast english on tape (f.ex. the radio news in english.)
- Well:** When I was talking to people, who I knew, I did well.
I didn't meet any problems, when I was shopping. I found it easier to talk to Jackie and the younger brother, that to talk to Lisa.
- Poorly:** When they were telling jokes, I didn't understand the point.
If somebody, who I didn't know addressed me, I found it difficult to catch the questions.
If they spoke too fast or used words, which I

didn't understand, I didn't always understand it if I was about to tell something I sometimes meet a word, which I couldn't explain.

How?: We are going to learn to explain an english word (which we don't know) in other english words.

I'm going to learn something about english humor. Read some jokes.

”

(4th year of English)

What makes a talk a good talk?

“

- The participants are at the same level (language, interests)
- A topic of interest to you
- When you disagree
- When you have experienced things you want to tell others
- When you want to share experiences
- New topics
- A nice atmosphere

”

(5th year of English)

Developing learner autonomy: teachers' experience

It is our experience that it ~~is~~ possible:

- for school learners, in a qualified manner, to make and be responsible for non-trivial decisions on their own aims and learning processes
- for strong and weak learners alike to develop an awareness of their own responsibility for learning and a practical knowledge of how to go about their learning things which doubtless will benefit them in later life, not only in the context of foreign language learning, but possibly also in other contexts.

It ~~is~~ possible to develop learner autonomy within a school context, but learner autonomy has the double status of being an aim and a means towards attaining that aim. The degree to which it is realised depends less on managerial frameworks established than on the realisation of responsible learner autonomy in real-life interaction in the classroom.

A condition for this is for the teacher to respect unconditionally the terms in which the learner formulates his/her awareness and maturing conception of the process of language learning and the conditions on which it takes place.

It implies a willingness on the part of the teacher to trust the learner's conceptions and intentions.

It implies a firm belief on the part of the teacher in the learner's ability to be in charge of his own learning.

It implies a change of learner role as well as teacher role - a change which is not easy but which is better regarded as a challenge than a problem.

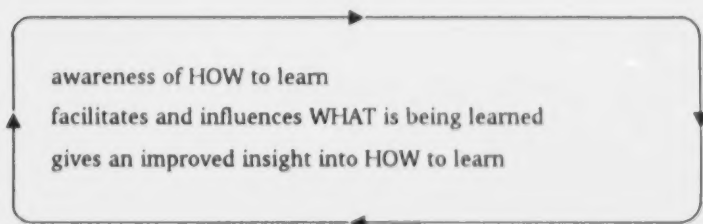
The pivot of the whole learning/teaching process is without doubt the recurring evaluation, a constant focus for both teacher and learners on:



Evaluation and evaluation sessions seem, in our experience, to have promoted:

- an awareness of learning processes and social processes in the classroom
- an awareness of personal possibilities and responsibilities within these processes.

A 'Good Circle' has been established:



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Holec, Henry: *Autonomy and self-directed learning: present fields of application*, Council of Europe, Strasbourg. (1988)

Further reading on our experience from developing autonomous language learning:

Breen, Michael, Chris Candlin, Leni Dam, and Gerd Gabrielsen: 'The evolution of a teacher training programme'. In, Robert Keith Johnson: *The second language curriculum*, Cambridge University press. (1989)

Dam, Leni and Gerd Gabrielsen: *Beginning English - an experiment*, Danmarks Laererhøjskole/Greve Kommune, Copenhagen, Denmark (mimeo). (1983)

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Dam, Leni and Gerd Gabrielsen: 'Developing Learner Autonomy in a School Context'. In, H Holec: *Autonomie et apprentissage autodirigé: Applications dans le contexte européen*, Council of Europe, Strasbourg. (1988)

Dickinson, Leslie: *Self-instruction in language learning*, Cambridge University Press. (1987)

Gabrielsen, Gerd: *Pupil initiative and teacher accountability*, extended report from Council of Europe Seminar, Lillehammer, August 12-16, 1985, Informasjonscentret for sprogpedagogik, Oslo, Norway. (1986)

Unpublished materials can be obtained from:

Leni Dam/Gerd Gabrielsen
Danmarks Laererhojskole
Emdrupvej 101
2400 Copenhagen NV
Denmark

where it is also possible to obtain copies of videos showing classroom work.

LETTING GO

Shifting responsibility to the learner

Judith Hamilton

Balerno High School

Shifting responsibility to the learner

When we started at Balerno High School, a brand new well-equipped school, 'taking responsibility for one's own learning' was a major aim. We had attractive 'learner-friendly' materials, mostly home-made, as well as peripheral audio-active language equipment (PALE) in every room so that learners could choose to listen or speak on their own or with a partner virtually at will.

We had agreed to speak French or German almost exclusively in the classroom, to pupils, each other and anyone dropping in. It all seemed eminently logical and in line with recent thinking about effective language learning.

So what went wrong?

COMMUNICATION PROBLEMS

- Failure to explain adequately to pupils what we were about, resulting in feelings of 'being done unto'.
- Lack of liaison with parents, who even when they understood what we were trying to do, were upset on behalf of their perturbed children, resulting in misunderstandings and some conflict.
- Problems with senior management, alerted by anxious parents, resulting in loss of our own confidence in ourselves.

LACK OF PREPARATION

- Failure to take into account pupils' previous learning experience and to gear our materials to take account of this, resulting in feelings of lack of success (years II and III had come from the overcrowded school 'down the road'; with the new SI intake we had no trouble whatsoever).
- Lack of systems whereby pupils could get an overview of where they were going, resulting in feelings of being lost.
- Failure to match materials to the ability level of the pupils, resulting in feelings of inability to cope.

DIFFERENT PERCEPTIONS

- Pupils' view of a good teacher as someone who leads them through 'the book' and gets them through exams, resulting in loss of confidence (not true for the 'difficult' class of reluctant draftees, with whom French rapidly became a favourite subject).
- A belief among some pupils that this wasn't 'real work' - leading to a certain amount of time wasting by pupils and agonies of guilt for the teachers.

Clearly in retrospect we might have foreseen these problems. Changes are never easy to manage and we could have done much more to involve pupils and inform parents. Also, while SI pupils had workbooks which they could work through at their own pace, we had not had the time to plan sufficiently for a totally unknown population.

What went right?

SI, who didn't know any different.

SIII slow learners, who loved the varied activities.

Evening classes, which demonstrated to the local population that the methodology was effective.

What changed things?

- Time, above all.
- The chance to address a parents' meeting, where we 'acted out' different teaching styles; this at least provoked a deal of mirth and improved public relations considerably.
- Exam successes (excellent results two years after the school opened put an end to most misgivings - such is the way of the world!)
- The improved materials:
 - the workbooks
 - the cassettes
 - the activity sheets
- Consistent departmental solidarity and mutual support (we think this is a *sine qua non* of any such massive change in methodology).
- The gradual development of a uniform way of working and standard of behaviour within the whole department to which newcomers, influenced by their need to 'fit in' with peer group norms, automatically adapted.
- Departmental rules about *readiness for learning*.

Readiness for learning

AN EXAMPLE

All pupils get a workbook at the very beginning of term. They are shown how to use these; i.e. *you can do any exercise you like at any time but you must be doing something*. Each pupil also has their own dictionary on the analogy that *you don't go to the swimming lesson without your swimming costume, so you don't come to languages without your dictionary*. A supply of spares ensures that those who genuinely cannot afford them are equipped by the department. Pupils are told they must always be working when the teacher arrives in the classroom. At the beginning of each lesson, pupils are encouraged to get going on their workbooks at once, doing whatever they choose. At around lesson five, the teacher is deliberately late for class. Half the class probably don't have their books out, hardly anyone is working. Big demonstration of disappointment/shock/horror from the teacher with a fair amount of histrionics.

A further occasion of lateness is arranged. This time a different member of the department goes into the class and registers extreme displeasure at the sight of any non-working pupils. It is much better if a stranger does this in the first instance, so that the class teacher is not cast in the role of 'baddy' and the pupils learn that all languages teachers have the same rules and standards of behaviour. From then on penalties occur for any pupil caught without books out and work under way.

Setting the tone

We rely very much on creating norms of acceptable behaviour which are constantly rewarded. We look to stimulate intrinsic motivation and to foster pupils' feelings of self-worth and value. Peer group pressure, because of the necessity of finding others to do some of the elective activities available, works on the side of the teacher.

To further the notion of working independently, pupils may be asked occasionally to spend a whole period working from their workbooks and cassettes, while their teacher simply observes them, perhaps writing the odd note and discussing working patterns or strategies with pupils towards the end of the lesson. This makes it easy for 'please takes' in our department and cover for absent teachers does not result in losses in pupils' learning.

Dealing with problems

Departmental strategy for the few pupils who fail to respond is removal to another class where, because there is no-one they know, they cannot distract others or be distracted by them and thus tend to get on with their work. Since they miss out on the games, drama techniques and other enjoyable activities, they usually work their way back fairly swiftly.

The keynote is that, from the pupils' point of view, it makes sense to work during the languages class. There is in fact no focus for disruptive behaviour and no place for class heroes who 'take on' the teacher.

Since the teacher is not tied up 'teaching', pupils with learning difficulties can get the help they need, when they need it.

What then of the pupil who, while not misbehaving, persistently does virtually nothing in class or at home? There are always some. We tend to let them be. Since 'carrots' in the shape of new books (and potentially interesting activities such as visits to the library, interviews with your favourite teacher, etc) are available to pupils who have completed a workbook, it soon becomes apparent to the lazy ones that their own interests lie in getting on with the work.

Side effects

It is perhaps worth noting a phenomenon that we had not expected. When offered choice as to how much work to do, pupils actually choose more than a teacher would expect. When an activity has two possible levels of response, (e.g. a letter from a penfriend with Task 'A' a simple demonstration of understanding and Task 'B' a reply in French), virtually all pupils elect to tackle both tasks.

How important is all this?

This training of behaviour is essential to our methodology, no matter how long it takes or how little French or German gets covered initially. We agree with Allwright that *'language teaching which does not include independence training is merely a sad waste of time, no matter how well-intentioned'*.

Materials

We have no course book as such. Because, by their very nature, course books assume a highly teacher-centred methodology, they seem to give very little that learners on their own can actually **do**.

Our home-produced workbooks have both progress cards, stating learning outcomes in terms the pupils and their parents can understand, and activity sheets saying what they can do during the

unit (extra reading, speaking, paired or group work, games, writing, etc).

Within a unit of work at Balerno, the activity sheet provides the structure whereby pupils, teachers and parents can perceive what is on offer in terms of skills, tasks, materials of all kinds, games and drama techniques. The progress card maps out what learners can do - with some core and some optional items. Between them they form a kind of pupils' syllabus and provide a structure through which they can operate.

The pupils' workbook contains a wide variety of material and tasks and pupils do as much as they can, depending on motivation and level. Surprisingly, they do a great deal. Each workbook has an accompanying pupil cassette for home and class work. The cassettes are provided by the pupils and the unit is copied by us on the fast copier, borrowed from Business Studies. Pupils have listening assignments in their workbooks corresponding to what is on their tapes.

In addition, listening material designed for individual and group work is held in the staff base in polythene bags; i.e. 6-8 short pre-recorded C15 cassettes with task sheet and answer sheets pinned onto the pinboard for immediate access. These will be indicated on the pupils' activity sheet. Blank speaking cassettes are also available to pupils. These and the other cassettes need clear labelling if they are not to get confused with the rest.

For published material to which pupils are directed in the activity sheets, we mostly make use of the Macmillan *Lothian* series, which pupils quickly learn to use independently. These are kept on shelves round the classrooms.

Conclusion

Life, while rarely dull, is not all roses. Doubts abound. Off-days occur when nothing appears to work, technology and pupils alike. Occasionally things 'go missing' or 'get broken'. The reins have to be pulled in for a while.

The pay-off for the teachers, who have to produce the considerable amount of material necessary for the system to succeed, is what the pupils produce and their readiness to have a go; from their readiness to use the foreign language with ourselves and each other, to their production of foreign language magazines, plays, and shows and the planning of their own visits abroad.

Where do we go from here?

Since the Lane End conference we have issued home-made diaries to our SIII German learners on the model described by Leni Dam. These have so far proved very popular and we intend to evaluate the experience in due course with a view to extending the practice.

Another useful and interesting idea for maintaining control of self-access material, and monitoring who is doing what, has come to us from the classroom of Sharon Muir of Unox Academy, Haddington, who herself adapted it from Janette Priester of Lasswade High School: a wide variety of material is available from pupils, mostly contained in ring pull files. Pupils each have a card with their name on it (Sharon uses cardboard dividers so that the names stick out) and these are inserted in the file from which the pupil selects the desired exercise/worksheet/game, etc. Thus a) other pupils who want that sheet can see who has it; b) the pupil doesn't lose track from day to day of what she/he is working on; and c) the teacher can see who is doing what. Pupils keep a record of what they have done on a separate card which goes in their own file, together with any written work they wish to keep or submit for assessment.

Part II

EXPERIMENTS IN AUTONOMOUS LEARNING

AUTONOMY IN OUR PRIMARY SCHOOL

Jane Johnson with Harinder Pardesi
and Chris Paine

St. Stephen's Primary School, London

Purpose

To share with others the philosophy and child-centred approach to learning which are central to the beliefs of all who work at St. Stephen's.

Philosophy

All the school policies and curriculum philosophies are based upon a child-centred philosophy.

We believe a child-centred philosophy is based upon the following criteria:

- knowledge of child development;
- knowledge and understanding of social/cultural background;
- curriculum issues - development
 - learning approaches
 - national issues;
- matching curriculum to children's needs and development;
- enabling children to take responsibility for their own learning and work.

Classroom autonomy relies on:

(1) Matching of tasks that children can do on their own.

(2) Some choice of activities - contrast of activities (within a perimeter).

(3) Resources

```
graph LR; Resources --- Writing[provision of writing implements paper]; Resources --- Books[books - reference fiction]; Resources --- Art[art material]; Resources --- Construction[construction and other concrete materials];
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(4) A secure environment where children feel safe to make choices, where they can have the time and opportunity to build on their confidence in choice and responsibility.

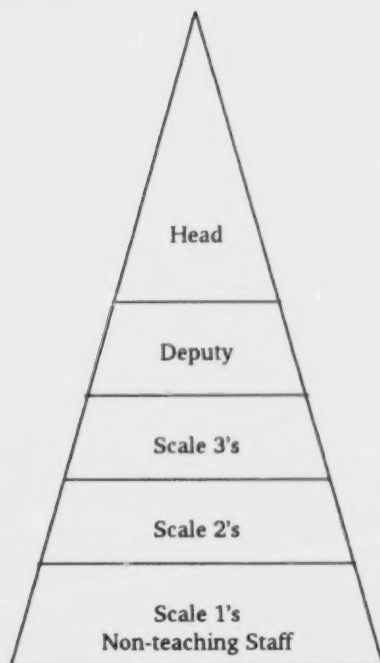
School management

We believe that for autonomy to be nurtured successfully in the classroom it must also act as a central factor to be enjoyed and respected by all adults working in the institution.

If the teaching force is to have autonomy, that powerful message will reach into the classroom and help to establish a common approach throughout the school.

This philosophy has major implications for management and leadership style. St. Stephen's has seen a change from a traditional (impoverished) structure (Model A) to a more flexible one based on team management (Model B).

MODEL A



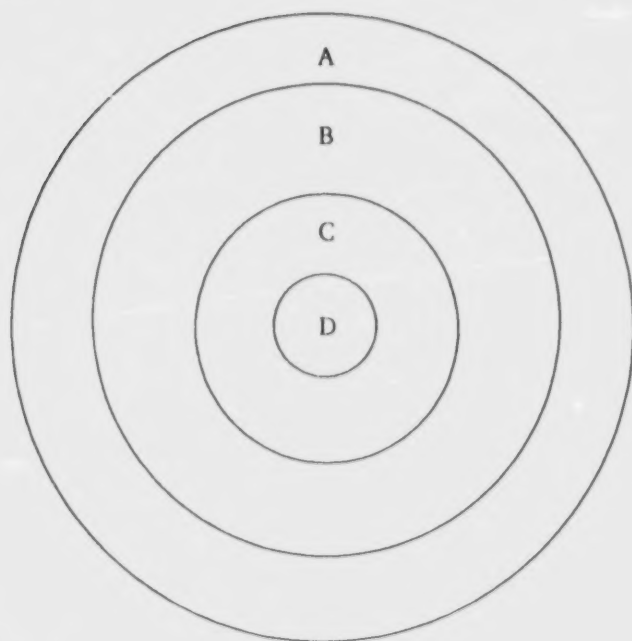
- poor communication between staff and Head, staff and staff
- authoritarian decision-making
- Head finding it hard to cope with
 - curriculum organisation
 - administration
 - re-organisation
- Head/deputy with little time for child contact
- too many ineffective staff meetings
- postholders feeling neglected and isolated
- non postholders feeling under-valued, not contributing their ideas and skills
- school not achieving best results for children/staff/parents

The need for change was recognised by all individuals. It was vital for the Head to accept and be positive about change.

The Head's own confidence and her confidence in her colleagues greatly influenced and eased the passage of change.

Over a series of meetings, external support and in-house training, an acceptable model for team management emerged.

MODEL B



- A = SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM
Team members: Head, Deputy, allowance 'C' teachers
- B = CURRICULUM TEAMS
Answering curriculum needs
Satisfying National Curriculum and school philosophy
Formulating curriculum policy
- C = TEAM X
Staff members working with the community
- D = PARENTS/CHILDREN
Parental involvement
Pupil pastoral care

- Circular form represents the school's non-hierarchical management structure.
- Individual staff opt into a team through personal choice.
- Each team elects its own team leader.
- Decisions are taken by teams.
- The structure is reviewed annually to:
 - (a) ensure the curricular and social needs of the school are met.
 - (b) allow movement for staff to support and develop skills in new teams.

Senior Management Team is concerned with:

- implementing external requirements, i.e. National Curriculum/Assessment/Borough policies, and ensuring the internal requirement of school are followed through, i.e. school philosophy;
- initiate whole school planning/organisation and general running of school;
- staff development;
- involvement as team members in curriculum.

Curriculum areas are prioritised annually, i.e. 90/91 - maths, technology, computers and resources (four teams).

The Inner Circle represents our child-centred approach to learning. All that we strive to accomplish must enhance the child's educational and social progress. The parents and children are at the heart/centre of all our work.

The new approach has several important advantages:

- Independence, through a 'common stake' in organisational purpose, leads to relationships of trust and respect and hence a supportive climate;
- Honesty and openness change any perceptions of threat into ones of support;
- Teachers become more aware of their skills and their strengths;
- The art of the possible can be approached more realistically;
- Individuals have a shared understanding and control of criteria.

How do we promote autonomy in the classroom?

Teachers' autonomy permeates into children's autonomy.

"The ultimate goal is to help pupils take responsibility for their own learning." (Ainscow and Tweedle 1988)

Our philosophy stems from the evidence of three educational writers, Piaget, Vygotsky and Bruner, who advocated child-centredness and said that the educational process must start from where the child is and how a child thinks.

As professionals, we have the expertise to empower children to be autonomous as citizens of the future. We must be prepared to share our **power** and **responsibility** by establishing respect and trust in our children.

The following suggestions have helped us and may help others.

TEACHERS' ATTITUDES

- awareness, sensitivity and confidence
- use of non-judgemental language
- promoting positive self-image
- giving balanced reasons in answer to questions (to dismantle negative views)
- awareness that learners are **bound** to make mistakes

CONTENT

- thorough planning and record keeping
- incorporate children's experiences
- widen the horizons of our knowledge
- actively develop positive attitudes towards self and others
- equip children with the knowledge to aid them in forming opinions
- explore a variety of perspectives
- develop respect for values, traditions, lifestyles, other than the child's own
- active listening to children

PEER GROUP INTERACTION

- discussion about tasks in pairs, small groups
- children to question, enquire and express
- children to devise a question, find an answer or pose a problem
- group co-operation in problem-solving
- role-play to consider conflict and empathy

SEATING ARRANGEMENTS

- flexible seating
- ability groups
- friendship groups
- paired activities
- individual

EFFECTIVE DIALOGUE WITH PARENTS

- psychological autonomy comes from what the children already know and from the home
- social autonomy comes from the interaction already established at home
- political autonomy will come after the first two
- understanding the children as whole beings and not empty vessels

RESPECT FOR THE CHILDREN

- they bring: their name, culture, sex, language, home

Classroom strategies

In order to promote autonomy within the framework of the National Curriculum and fulfil its main aim, *better educational achievement*, the maintenance and development of pupils' own language is vital to self esteem and confidence and depends on the languages of **all** pupils being valued and welcomed in schools.

It is extremely important to nurture this confidence by putting English into the broader context of language, thereby ensuring access to the rest of the curriculum. Below are some of the classroom strategies we have tried.

We decide together what rules, if any, are needed and maybe their sanctions. This enables children to actually own the rules.

Within the national, local and school planning, the children are asked to choose the topic for the term or half term and to provide ideas. This enables them to feel responsible and motivated.

In the course of a day children have tasks to fulfil - they select the order of the tasks and keep a record of finished work with a tick. This enables them to choose and record their own work.

Co-operative circle exercise; all the children and the teacher sit on chairs in a circle and share news/thoughts/problems whilst holding a shell. No-one is compelled to speak if they don't want to - the shell can be passed on. This helps to develop respect, confidence, trust and empathy over a period of time.

Children are allowed to respond to the register in other languages. This helps them overcome the fear of learning a new language and reaffirms how much they know already.

Using bi/trilingual skills in explaining tasks and as a positive role model of other languages. This increases children's confidence to use their own language whilst working on their own tasks.

Graffiti wall for messages. This provides a stimulus for discussion in the 'co-operative circle' and also a purpose for writing.

Affirmation exercise; enables children to write something positive about each class member and develop positive self-image.

COLLABORATIVE LEARNING:

Taking the first steps

Vee Harris and Gérard Noyau

on behalf of teachers at Langdon, Lister, Plashet, St Angela's and St Bonaventure's schools and the PGCE Modern Languages students at Goldsmiths' College.

The role of collaborative learning in developing autonomy

In the autumn term of 1989, a joint project was established between the London Borough of Newham and Goldsmiths' College. The aim of the project was to identify what is involved in setting up collaborative group work. We were not attempting to achieve a 'fully-fledged' model of autonomy, but we were aware of the teacher-dominated nature of our lessons and we wanted to explore how we could take the first steps towards breaking that stranglehold. With the advent of the communicative approach, many language teachers have set up oral tasks to be performed in pairs or groups, but these tasks are usually preceded by activities where the pupils are heavily dependent on the teacher to provide the input of the new language. We wanted to encourage pupils to use alternative resources for learning, and to tackle problems for themselves. It is this personal and individual effort to make sense of what is said and to convey our meanings that is a prime factor in promoting learning.

The idea of group work was also important to us for another reason. We knew that it was well-established in other subject areas, where pupils are encouraged to talk ideas through, and to draw on each other as learning resources. We wanted to explore what that

meant for modern language teaching. We have, in the course of the project, become increasingly interested in the potential role of collaborative learning in developing pupil autonomy. So, although we want to work towards a model where each pupil develops their own personal learning strategies, and learns to assess their own strengths and weaknesses, the model has also to stress the importance of helping pupils to cooperate, to take responsibility not only for their own learning but for other people's. We accept that the educational system must stretch each individual pupil as much as possible, but we also believe that we are preparing them for adult life, where it will be critical for them to be able to pull together as a team, whether at work, in the home or at leisure.

Background to the project

In the project, sixteen student teachers in the first term of their PGCE course at Goldsmiths' College went into Newham schools for five Thursday mornings. Their purpose there was to provide extra support for the teachers in taking the first initial steps away from a teacher-centred classroom and towards developing some degree of autonomy in pupils' learning.

There were five schools involved, both single-sexed and mixed, and both streamed and mixed ability. Newham is a multi-ethnic community with the range of pupils you might expect to find in the East End of London.

In the course of the term, the following key questions have emerged:

WHAT DO THE GROUPS DO AND HOW DO THEY RESPOND?

For the sake of convenience and familiarity, our initial model was based primarily around the four skills, with a carousel of reading writing, listening and speaking tasks. In addition, there was always a card or board game, and in one class, a computer game.

The most obvious advantage of organising lessons in this way was the increase in motivation observed by the teachers and students alike. In a questionnaire carried out at one of the schools, 89% of

the pupils said they found group work easier, 75% said they enjoyed it more and 64% felt that they learnt more. Some comments from the pupils suggest other advantages:

*'We can all put our ideas together and come up with a solution'
'People who don't usually talk out in class express their views'
'Can talk about stuff instead of keeping your mouth shut and not getting any work done because you don't know what it meant'*

HOW DO YOU ORGANISE THE CLASSROOM?

We observed that pupils became more used over time to the rituals of group work. There are some basic techniques that seem to make classroom organisation easier. These include:

- having a clear structure to the way lessons are organised with the names of the groups on each table and the tasks they are to do displayed on a wall chart;
- putting any recordings onto a short cassette and having dictionaries readily available;
- establishing 'ground rules' for group work, such as 'ask each other, and consult the dictionary **before** you ask the teacher.'

HOW DO YOU DETERMINE THE GROUPINGS?

Pupils can be grouped randomly, in friendship groups or according to ability. The results from the questionnaires we administered in two schools suggest that, although pupils may prefer to be in friendship groups, they are less convinced that working just with their friends is actually better for their learning. There may be arguments for a flexible arrangement provided that, if pupils are moved round, they always have one friend in any new grouping.

We have also to acknowledge that some people simply prefer working alone or that a group does not work well together. This is evident in some of the less positive comments from the pupils:

*'Tend to produce less work than working alone'
'Sometimes people get on your nerves'*

There need to be opportunities both for pupils to work individually, and also to develop their awareness of how to operate in a group. Again, some 'ground rules' around not being bossy, and not leaving someone out, may need to be established with the class.

DOES ABILITY LEVEL AFFECT HOW PUPILS ADAPT TO GROUP WORK?

We had the impression that the top sets adapted the most quickly to this way of working. Presumably, they had more skills to draw on when working independently and also the confidence to feel they were competent to tackle the problems. Bottom sets may need a more gradual and more carefully-structured introduction to group work, and the support of the Special Needs teacher will be crucial.

DO GIRLS FIND IT EASIER TO WORK COLLABORATIVELY THAN BOYS?

We had not anticipated finding any differences in the way boys and girls approached group work. However, teachers from both the mixed schools reported that the boys tended to see the tasks as a race to see who could finish first, to rely on the brightest in the group to supply the answers, or to work individually. Askew and Ross have made similar observations in their book *Boys don't cry*. Some tasks may be better at fostering collaboration than others and we need in particular to explore ways of making written tasks more collaborative.

HOW TO MONITOR PUPILS' PROGRESS?

We need to be sure that pupils are not simply relying on others in the group to complete the task, and to build in progression to the tasks so that pupils really are stretched from one topic to the next. A number of ways of organising assessment have emerged:

- pupils can be given a marking card, once the group has completed a task, and then asked to record their results. A tape-recorder can be placed on the speaking table, for the oral task;
- pupils can be encouraged to identify their strengths and weaknesses, filling in a sheet after each task, commenting on whether they enjoyed it and what they need to be able to improve on their performance;
- once pupils are used to the group work rituals, the teacher can increasingly try to target particular groups with which to work intensively. Tasks can be designed with quite clear criteria in mind, so that they can be used to build up a picture of the range of a pupil's skills. So, for example, there should be both open-ended and tightly-structured oral tasks to assess.

HOW CAN WE DEVELOP A MORE COMMUNICATIVE AND COLLABORATIVE MODEL FOR GROUP WORK?

There were practical and theoretical problems with the first carousel model. On a practical level, there were problems when one group was ready to move on and the other group hadn't finished. There were also problems in trying to provide enough input before asking pupils to do a speaking task, since the practice phase, using flashcards and so on, was lost.

On a more theoretical level, we were concerned that the lessons were rather bitty. Pupils did some listening and reading, but where was it all going? We wanted there to be realistic outcomes for their learning, and also a real purpose to working together rather than individually.

We have now developed a second model, which requires a great deal more long-term planning but which seems to meet at least some of the problems identified. This model takes a particular topic and tries to identify a number of long-term goals. In the case of 'school', for example, these included producing a prospectus for the assistants and a poster showing the class's likes and dislikes about school life. These long-term goals are then broken down into the mini-tasks that pupils would need to do to acquire the necessary language; listening to other teenagers' opinions on school, for example, and conducting a group survey. The goals and the mini-tasks are presented to pupils in the form of an assignment booklet, each goal having its own box of support material, which pupils work through at their own speed. On a practical level, this means that no two groups want to work at the same time on a particular activity. On a more theoretical level, it means that the pupils can see a purpose to the activities.

Finally, because the pupils are able to work through the assignments independently over a number of weeks, the teacher is free to circulate amongst them, providing intensive speaking practice with one group at a time, or monitoring their performance. What we now want to do is see if we can avoid some of the burden of making all the support material, by referring pupils to particular pages in text books. This is perhaps more like the model Judith Hamilton presents earlier in the book.

We still have a long way to go in developing pupil autonomy, but the first few steps we have taken have persuaded us that it is a worthwhile path to follow.

Reference

Askew, S and C Ross: *Boys don't cry*, Oxford University Press. (1988)

Examples of goals and mini-tasks

THEMA 'SCHULE': checklist of tasks

By the end of this topic, you and your group will have done the following.
(In German of course!)

1. LIFE IN A GERMAN SCHOOL

You will find out about what a German school is like - starting and finishing times, how long their breaks are, how much homework they have, etc.

2. PLASHET SCHOOL

You will produce a written introduction to what Plashet School is like. The best of each group's work will make up a little brochure that can be given to the German assistants when they arrive. Later we might add to the brochure by telling them what there is to do in the area.

You will make a map of Plashet School showing where certain places are. For example, the staff rooms, canteens, Headteacher's room. The best map will be put into the brochure.

3. SCHOOL SUBJECTS

You will find out which are the favourite school subjects in your group. At the end of the topic, each group will report back to the whole class, so we can find out the favourite subjects of the class as a whole.

4. LIKES AND DISLIKES

You will find out what each group likes and dislikes most about life at school. At the end of the topic, each group will report back to the whole class, so we can find out what the class likes and what are the most common complaints.

You will make a poster showing what are the most important changes you would like to see in school.

You can do the tasks in any order, but the group must all agree. In each task, you must do activities (a) and (b) first, before moving on to the next activity. But you can do (b) before (a) if another group has got the materials you need. Put a tick when you finish each activity so that you have a record of what you have done.

HINWEISE (Detailed information)

Task 1: Life in a German school

This is what you have to do in order to complete the task. Remember: you must do activities (a) and (b) first, before moving on to the next activity. But you can do (b) before (a) if another group has got the materials you need.

- a) Listen to the tape about life in a German school and ask your partner about her school day.
- b) Read the letter describing life in a German school and write notes about your school day.
- c) In pairs, one person interviews their partner to find out about the imaginary school they go to. Decide if you would like to go to that school.
- d) Make up a similar school information card for another group to work on.
- e) Find out about school life in any other country. Perhaps ask your parents. Then tell the rest of your group about it.

Task 2: Plashet School

This is... (see above)

- a) Look at the map of a German school.
 - b) Label a map of Plashet School.
 - c) Read the written introduction to King's School and Queen Mary School. Use the dictionary.
 - d) Decide with your partner which of the schools you would like to go to.
 - e) Write a description of Plashet School.
-
-

Task 3: School subjects

This is... (see above)

- a) Match the words for different school subjects with the pictures. (Use dictionaries and your common sense! Which words look like English words?) Play the game.
- b) Read Marika's time-table and answer the questions.
- c) Fill in your own time-table.
- d) Make up your idea of the perfect time-table.
- e) Listen to pupils saying which subjects they like and dislike on the tape.
- f) Ask your partner which subjects she likes and dislikes.
- g) Choose one person as group leader - she must ask each person which subjects their partner liked.

Task 4: Likes and dislikes

This is... (see above)

- a) Match up the pictures to the words that tell you what someone likes and dislikes about school.
 - b) Listen to Ute saying what she likes and dislikes about school on the tape.
 - c) Ask your partner what she likes and dislikes about school.
 - d) Choose one person as group leader. She must ask each person what her partner disliked. Fill in the bar chart. Be prepared to tell the rest of the class which things your group most disliked.
 - e) Read the suggestions about how to make school life better. (Use dictionaries.)
 - f) Put the suggestions in order, with the most important first.
 - g) Make a poster showing what your group most dislikes about school. Don't forget to mention the most important changes they would make.
-

USEFUL WORDS FOR WORKING IN GROUPS

We'll start with task 2.

I don't agree.

I do agree.

Task 3 is better.

Task 3 is more interesting.

Task 3 is easier.

You are group leader.

Look in the dictionary.

Ask Mr Frith.

What do we do now?

We read this text.

We listen to the tape.

We do this exercise.

I don't know.

I don't understand.

This is hard.

This is easy.

We want to do task 1.

Are you ready/finished yet?

Look at the pictures.

Which sentence matches
which picture?

Copy the grid.

Ask your partner.

Read.

Wir fangen mit Aufgabe 2 an.

Ich bin nicht einverstanden.

Ich bin einverstanden.

Aufgabe 3 ist besser.

Aufgabe 3 ist interessanter.

Aufgabe 3 ist leichter.

Du bist die Leiterin.

Schlag's im Wörterbuch nach.

Frag Mr Frith.

Was machen wir jetzt?

Wir lesen diesen Text.

*Wir hören uns die Kassette
an.*

Wir machen diese Übung.

Ich weiß nicht.

Ich verstehe nicht.

Das ist schwierig/schwer.

Das ist leicht.

*Wir wollen Aufgabe 1
machen.*

Bist du/Seid ihr schon fertig?

Schau die Bilder an.

*Welcher Satz paßt
zu welchem Bild?*

Trag die Tabelle ein.

Frag deine Partnerin.

Lies.

FIRST STEPS TOWARDS AUTONOMY

for pupils with learning difficulties

Bernardette Holmes

County Advisory Teacher for Essex

Before pupils can begin to take responsibility for their learning, they must each be:

- clear about what they are aiming for;
- aware of the resources available to help them;
- free to choose which resources suit them best;
- confident that they will be involved in any decisions made about assessment.

In an ideal world this would always be so, but with the pressures of the National Curriculum, classes of thirty or more pupils and shortages of time, resources and in staffing, many colleagues feel compromised and unable to provide an environment which offers equal opportunities to learners of all abilities and needs.

This article, and the video* extracts which support it, outline the first attempts to introduce a more autonomous approach to learning to a class of twelve-year-old pupils, who had been identified as 'bottom set'. The work was supported by the PALM Project (*Pupil Autonomy in Learning with Micro-electronics*, based at the University of East Anglia) and has prompted a great deal of further research across the county.

* The video *Autonomy in language learning* can be consulted in the CILT library.

Most of the pupils in the group had different learning needs. Some had poor visual memory, which impeded reading and writing in the mother tongue. Few could sequence and classify information. Most had a short concentration span. Some lacked self-confidence, while for others the problem was one of over-confidence and dominance. Certain pupils were hyperactive. Poor motivation and irregular attendance interfered with progress in a few cases. All had one feature in common, a sense of failure.

It was felt that pupils experiencing learning difficulties required more stimulus not less; that there should be variety and pace in the presentation of materials and that, wherever possible, pupils should be active in all phases of the lesson. The emphasis was on enjoyment and involvement. Strategies to encourage the pupils to be more self-sufficient were introduced. Visuals accompanied by mimes formed the presentation. Pupils repeated the new vocabulary and performed 'action pictures', which helped them memorise and recall the phrases. A self-help sheet was supplied, which provided the pupils with a set of the same visuals and the relevant language to be used in the communicative tasks which were to follow.

After the presentation and pre-communicative support, the class divided into groups. There were four activity areas, two of which were self-supporting to allow the teacher freedom to join in with the information-gap activity, where pupils were in most need of direct assistance. The activities comprised:

- information-gap pair work;
- listening with junction box and headsets;
- investigative reading;
- collaborative learning with the concept keyboard.

All instructions were given in the target language, apart from certain instructions on the tape, where the use of some English was found to be unavoidable if pupils were to be fully in control of the learning. The task sheets themselves relied heavily on the use and re-use of the same visuals. In this way there was an unambiguous system of communication, which did not necessitate the medium of English. The reading tasks used as little text as possible and had been prepared on a word-processor. Some redundant material was used in certain tasks in both the reading and the listening activities.

Although this was the 'bottom set', it was not homogeneous and it was decided to present challenges to the most able learners. The self-help sheets assisted all of the pupils, but the most able were encouraged to try tasks without reference to the self-help sheet, when they were confident enough to do so. Solutions were available for the listening and reading tasks, so that pupils could assess themselves. The information-gap activity allowed for self-assessment by cross-checking with the visuals.

The collaborative work at the concept keyboard was supported by the project officer from PALM. However, once the pupils become familiar with the equipment, it is intended that this kind of activity will also be self-supporting, offering the opportunity of mixed-skill activities, the promotion and extension of reading skills, check-back facility and positive experiences of creative writing within a defined framework.

The approach provided the pupils with many 'firsts':

- the first occasion for them to be in control of their own listening equipment;
- for some, the first experience of successful reading without teacher intervention;
- the first *bain linguistique*; a chance to prove to themselves that it is possible to understand what is expected of them without laborious instructions in English;
- the first real sense of success in foreign language production;
- the first dabble with information technology.

It was imperative to learn from the learners. Therefore, informal interviews were set up with a small representative group to discuss the effectiveness of the lesson from the pupils' point of view. It was from these discussions that lessons were learnt about clear open typeface being more important than size of letters; that once text runs over onto the next line on a page, it becomes harder to read; that the concept keyboard is easy and fun to use; that information-gap activities are 'wicked'!

There were aspects of the pilot lesson which required modification; implications for classroom lay-out and equipment were raised; time

to prepare materials was a key issue. Yet, in the light of all the potential problems, we were convinced that pupils with learning difficulties can work collaboratively and alone with a variety of resources and equipment, and given the opportunity, can and should be given the right to take responsibility for their own learning.

Colleagues should be warned that watching the video can seriously improve your morale!

I should like to acknowledge the help of Colbayns High School, Clacton, and Erica Brown, Project Officer from PALM (Pupil Autonomy in Learning with Micro-electronics).

Key concepts, findings and recommendations

CHILDREN WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

require:

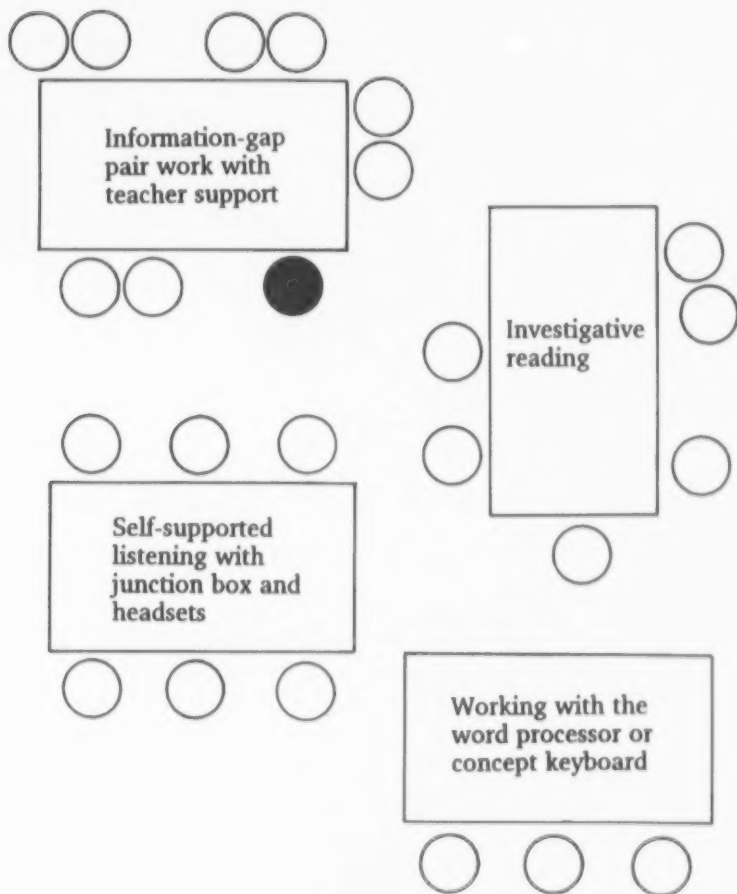
- more stimulus not less
- variety and pace of presentation
- active participation in all phases of the lesson
- lots of reinforcement activities

EQUIPMENT AND RESOURCES:

Try to provide varied experiences



WHAT COULD YOUR CLASSROOM LOOK LIKE?



SOME POPULAR MYTHS



- **Big print means simple to read**
- Materials with lots of English are easy to use
- Classroom communication in the foreign language is impossible
- Information-gap pair work is too complex
- Low attainers cannot take responsibility for their own learning

SOME RECENT FINDINGS



- Clear open typeface assists reading
- Too much English obstructs the learner
- Learners attempt to use the foreign language more readily, once they perceive it as natural
- Lockstep approaches, where all learners complete the same task at the same time, can create administrative and support problems
- Children with learning difficulties can work collaboratively and alone with a variety of resources and equipment

A TYPICAL LESSON

Following a presentation involving the overhead projector and mime games, the class is divided into four activity groups:

- A Information-gap pair work
- B Investigative reading
- C Self-supported listening with junction box and headsets
- D Collaborative learning with the concept keyboard



All children have the opportunity to participate in each activity.

Groups move round after approximately ten minutes.

Activities B, C and D should not require constant teacher support, allowing the teacher freedom to join in with Activity A.

What could a typical lesson be?

Year 7: A lesson on the weather

PRESENTATION

1. Using an overhead projector, weather symbols are presented.
Each weather expression is accompanied by actions.
The children listen, repeat and imitate the action.
The teacher performs an 'action picture' and asks what the weather is like.
Individual children offer the answer and point out the correct weather symbol on the transparency.
 2. Children are divided into teams.
Team members come up in turn to mime a weather condition.
The first correct answer wins the point.
 3. Returning to the overhead projector, the teacher presents a second transparency - an outline map of France with ten towns marked.
Children repeat the names.
 4. Using individual weather symbols, the teacher builds up and describes a weather chart.
Children are invited to use the overhead projector.
The child asks the class what the weather is like in a particular town.
The class gives a weather condition.
The child chooses the correct symbol and places it on the outline map.
The teacher supports by ensuring that the correct symbol is selected.
 5. A self-help sheet with the weather symbols and French expressions is distributed around the class.
-
-

SUGGESTIONS FOR GROUP ACTIVITIES

Activity A: Information-gap pair work

The group subdivides into 'A's and 'B's.

The 'A' cards are orange.

The 'B' cards are yellow.

Orange cards show the weather chart for five out of ten

French towns named on the map.

Yellow cards show the weather chart for the other five.

By asking and answering questions the 'A' group swops information with the 'B' group.

If time allows they swop cards and play the game again.

Activity B: Investigative reading

Each child has a blue reading sheet giving simple weather forecasts for the ten towns on the map.

By using the self-help sheet, if required, each child draws the appropriate symbols onto the weather map for the forecasts given.

Activity C: Self-supported listening with junction box and headsets

Some simple and clear instructions are given in English on the tape.

Each child has a pink task sheet compiled from the same symbols as in the presentation.

Children can listen to the French as often as they like by winding back the tape.

Listening tasks include:

- ticking symbols when you recognise an expression;
- joining up symbols to places on the map;
- ticking a grid to record a variety of weather conditions in different places in Europe.

Once the group feels ready, the group leader can wind the tape to the answer section and each group member can check his own progress.

Activity D: The concept keyboard

The children require a set of weather symbols on card.

The first concept keyboard overlay is built up from the same symbols.

Each child takes it in turns to sit at the keyboard and asks what the weather is like.

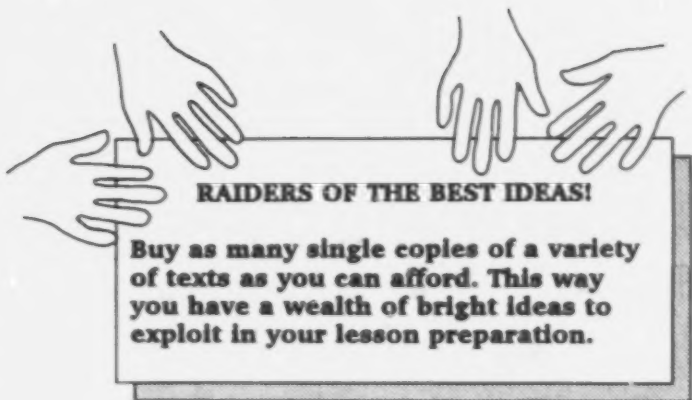
Group members say what is on their cards.

By touching the appropriate symbol on the overlay, the correct French expression will appear on the screen.

HANDY HINTS

In selecting or preparing materials:

- **have as little text as possible on a page**
- **avoid extended text - once a text runs over onto the next line, it becomes harder to read**
- **opt for answer grids or tick charts which are easy to use, and do not require children to plough through laborious instructions**
- **speak with your publishers to see if they agree to you 'customising' taped material for your pupils' needs**



RAIDERS OF THE BEST IDEAS!

Buy as many single copies of a variety of texts as you can afford. This way you have a wealth of bright ideas to exploit in your lesson preparation.

RESPONSIBILITY AND RESOURCES

Vaughan Malcolm

Filton Technical College

What is flexible learning?

A suitable definition might be: 'the creation of learning opportunities tailored to meet the needs of the learner.' We feel we have to do this because of the nature of the students we serve. Our programmes embrace and respond to:

DIFFERING INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

- the 'A' level student seeking qualification for Higher Education;
- the part-timer married to a Frenchman, having lived in France for eight years, needing a formal qualification recognising her fluency;
- the businessman with school French needing oral practice at a time to suit him outside office hours.

DIFFERING GROUP NEEDS

- the engineers doing beginners' German to improve their confidence in dealing, at a very basic level, with their counterparts abroad, taking FLIC preliminary when they are ready;
- the BTEC French option group doing assignment work over two years;
- the Adult Spanish improvers negotiating for a second home in Spain.

VARIETY IN THE CLASSROOM; RESOURCES AND GROUP WORK

- responding to the Friday afternoon sag with something more lively;
- mixing media and resources to sustain interest during a three-hour 'A' level class on a Monday afternoon;
- team-teaching with the foreign language assistant.

How does flexible learning meet student needs?

The student is the focus of attention. This is an acknowledged aim in our workscheme for all classes at all levels and comprises:

NEGOTIATION

If the student is to be the focus of attention, then he/she must have the right to negotiate the learning programme with the teacher.

INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION MAKING

The student is an essential part of the decision-making process, if you believe in this approach. In order to achieve this, the teacher has to be prepared to voluntarily relinquish her position of absolute authority in the classroom, to trust in the students' ability to make decisions soundly, and to show them 'unconditional regard' (Brandes and Ginnis in *A guide to student-centred learning*).

LEARNING CONTRACTS

The practical outcome of the above. The student agrees to fulfil a certain number of tasks within a given period and takes full responsibility for attendance, punctuality and other agreements made with the teacher and institution (see Appendix A).

FAMILIARISATION WORKSHOP

For flexible learning to take place in practice - that is, for students to work in different groups, know and trust each other and the teacher, for the production of the foreign language and to be able to take decisions jointly - they must **feel comfortable**. Hence the adoption of a familiarisation workshop (see Appendix B). Results this year were good, according to the students. They know each other well now. They are not intimidated by the better ones in the class and can be honest with the teacher.

How do we put our philosophy into practice?

GERMAN 'A' LEVEL; FROM SPOONFEEDING TO AUTONOMY

When introducing this system, my mistake was to act solely as enabler/facilitator and to relinquish my power base. The result was insecurity and a loss of confidence by students in the teacher. The teacher still has an important task as a role model, to take decisions for students until they feel comfortable and confident to do the same.

GA1; THE CLASS, THE GROUP, THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE ASSISTANT

At the beginning of the year I take responsibility for working through the course book, setting homework, and so on. However, there is plenty of good group activity, which shifts the focus away from the teacher as the centre of the universe, together with constant feedback sessions on each activity to encourage, endorse and approve student participation. For example, I stopped normal coursework with the first year 'A' level German group during the events of November 1989 in the GDR, suggesting that we ought to deal with history in the making. They came forward with their own ideas, asked for clarification on historical background, negotiated their use of German with me and told me to stop after three weeks when they had had enough. Thus we struck a balance between a pedagogic and an androgogic approach.

GA2; A SELF-DEFINED LEARNING APPROACH

After the pre-Christmas mocks, students analysed their performance and planned action to be taken over the next six months. As a result, they defined their needs without my intervention, only my guidance. They had moved from spoonfeeding to autonomy, and there were several practical outcomes. A French group wanted short, regular bursts of exam listening comprehension practice each week, along with individual sessions with the assistant, as opposed to the usual group ones. A German group worked individually or in small groups on different topics at the same time, selecting material which would help them to overcome weaknesses.

THE WESSEX PROJECT

The AEB pilot project, with 40% coursework, is flexible because students can work on different modules at their own pace. They can also define format and, to some extent, content.

PART-TIME STUDENTS

A flexible timetable is designed to suit student needs. For example, not all part-timers are able to, or need to, attend all class sessions. The teacher negotiates individually what suits them best. 'A' level students coming in for just one foreign language class can work better and achieve more at home. Using a learning contract, they negotiate what they will produce in this time.

LANGUAGE TRAINING FOR INDUSTRY

The FLIC course allows the student to take the examination when ready. Thus our LTI students, whose courses are often interrupted by work commitments and visits abroad, can make up time when convenient and take the exam when properly prepared.

DIVERSIFICATION OF THE FIRST FOREIGN LANGUAGE

We could call this 'back to back and change your tune'! I teach German to French teachers at two levels:

- 1) 6.00-7.00pm, then solo workshop session until 8.00pm
- 2) 7.00-8.00pm with the advanced group, then workshop session.

Therefore, each group gets two hours' worth, but I only have to work for three hours.

Flexible learning also includes the teacher. There is no reason why double linguists should restrict themselves to one language in the classroom. For example, one student may want to go over a French essay in German, another a Spanish oral practice in French; and why not?

RESOURCES

Flexible learning requires flexible resources. We are fortunate at Filton. The fast cassette copier, language laboratory and video machine are all invaluable. There is also a simple but effective storage system for topics, along with materials in A4 folders on a shelf in the classroom for ready access by students. A keyword computer database allows rapid access to a wide range of materials.

Students are generally better equipped technologically than schools, so why not use this technology? For example, a regular weekly homework for 'A' level students might include reading *The Radio Times* and *TV Times* to find foreign films for live viewing or

recording on video. Those with satellite TV can record 'Dallas' in French for playback in the classroom. Personal cassette players allow concentrated listening while waiting at the bus stop (e.g. foreign radio recorded on home cassette radio). This is all part of flexible learning where the student is taking responsibility for the course.

Conclusion

If the student, rather than the teacher, is to be the focus of attention, then the programme is bound to reflect individual differences as well as shared aims. A flexible approach to learning becomes the inevitable and desired outcome. The challenge lies first of all in the adoption of a different stance by both the teacher and the student, which runs counter to previous learning experiences. Secondly, the provision of resources must be able to cope with a wide range of varying demands. At Filton we have taken up this challenge and have realised that it will always be with us, evolving and changing. But there is no going back...

APPENDIX A

LEARNING CONTRACT 1

NAME SUBJECT LEVEL

Dear

From to I undertake to complete the following work:

ITEM	DATE	LIST		RE		SPE	WRITE				EV	ASS
		G	D	G	D		PL> E	ESS	E> FL	QU		

GENERAL READING: TITLE:

SUMMARY:

In order to ensure good progress in this subject, I also agree to the following:-

- 1) to attend all classes without fail,
- 2) to notify college of any absence through illness on the first day of that illness,
- 3) to notify my teacher of any other absence (such as college trip) in advance and in writing,
- 4) to negotiate changes in this contract in good time.

I understand that failure to fulfil this contract will jeopardise my chances of completing this course successfully,

Signed,

COMMENT ON ATTITUDE AND EFFORT AND ATTENDANCE:

TEACHER

STUDENT

APPENDIX B

MODERN LANGUAGES WORKSHOP 1989

INTRODUCTION

It is now a fact of life that our GCE language classes at Filton are large. While the overall level of achievement is still high (at least measured in terms of examination success) problems do arise which affect academic progress and the enjoyment of learning:

- 1) Students come from a wide variety of backgrounds and schools, and from different departments within the college. As a result large classes often resolve themselves socially into cliques and isolated individuals who do not relate to each other. Some students certainly prefer the anonymity of the crowd and are rightly comfortable in that role. On the other hand a lack of trust permeates the group which has a direct bearing on the production of language. Individuals or small groups are reluctant to speak to each other or to the class in the FL, or to work together on the development of the reading, writing and comprehension skills. Since we are committed to the communicative approach to language teaching this factor conspires directly against our success. Students themselves are well aware of this, although they voice their complaints much more simply:
 - *'We don't do enough oral work'*
 - *'I don't like to say anything in case the others laugh at me'*
 - *'I feel inhibited because everyone's better than me'*
 - *'I work much better in the German/Spanish group' (which are much smaller than the French)*.
- 2) Students find it very difficult to take responsibility for their own learning. Their academic background is still dominated by the teacher as pedagogue; that is to say, responsible for the students' learning needs, their discipline, and their motivation. Thus it comes as a considerable shock when we start to involve them in the decision-making process. We have also found it difficult as staff to strike a balance between taking control when the students need it and encouraging them to analyse their particular needs and develop their own initiatives. We must not forget that we ourselves are products of the pedagogic approach and that we tend to teach in the way we were taught.

These two elements are the reason why we would like to run a workshop for staff and students. They are proof positive once again that learning is **not** simply cognitive, but also affective (perhaps **mainly** affective), and that we neglect that issue at our peril.

AIMS:

STUDENTS

- 1) *To develop an atmosphere of trust and confidence amongst students*
- 2) *To enable students in a large group (20+) to get to know each other*
- 3) *To enable students to feel confident enough to break away from cliques and work with others in the class*
- 4) *To enable individuals (isolated through shyness or absence of friendship group) to be accepted by others*
- 5) *To enable students to assume responsibility for their own learning by:*
 - *analysing their needs and goals on the course;*
 - *considering their teacher as an adviser and facilitator, rather than as a pedagogue;*
 - *examining their commitment to and motivation for the course.*
- 6) *To enable students to trust in and enjoy working with their teacher*
- 7) *To enable students to feel confident in their own abilities and potential as linguists*

STAFF

- 1) *To enable staff to relate positively to a large class*
- 2) *To enable staff to relate positively to individuals or small groups within the class*
- 3) *To enable staff to relinquish their omnipotent role as teachers and yet retain a role as adviser and guide*
- 4) *To enable staff to work successfully in a team*

PROVIDER

Martin Wells C.Q.S.W. C.M. (ITAA)

Psychotherapist, Transactional Analyst, Group Facilitator

VENUE Performance area, Shield House

DATE October 3, 4, 5

STAFF VM, HAM, AMS, JP

FLEXIBLE LEARNING NORTH EAST MODERN LANGUAGES

Angela Nichols and Carole Shepherd

Flexible Learning Development Unit, NE

Background

The Project is part of a National Initiative funded by the Training Agency and has two main strands:

- **the regional framework;** within the timescale June 1989 - June 1990, the NE Project plans to disseminate its findings on a regional basis. It is the only such project solely and specifically geared to Modern Languages;
- **the national projects;** these address particular aspects of Flexible Learning which include a review of modern languages materials by the NFER to be disseminated nationally.

Objectives

These are to:

- raise the level of understanding of Supported Self Study as an enhancement to existing learning styles;
- provide a model strategy for the development, management and evaluation of Supported Self Study in modern languages;
- produce teaching schemes and programmes showing how modern languages learning can be enhanced through Supported Self Study in the 14-18 age range;
- facilitate the production of good quality study guides;

- provide INSET for modern languages teachers in Supported Self Study;
- establish a regional SSS network for linking modern languages teachers;
- report on the potential for industrial collaboration;
- collect and manage a reference library and database of Flexible Learning resources for modern languages.

The Project also sets out to support learning styles which:

- involve students more actively in the learning process;
- adapt work to the needs of the individual;
- place an increasing responsibility for learning on the students themselves.

Intended outcomes

For the student, these include:

- increased motivation and control over one's own learning;
- the acquisition of more skills relevant to continuing learning;
- the development of a student/teacher partnership;
- individual needs met more effectively;
- a wider choice of learning routes.

Support for teachers

Flexible learning strategies aim to support teachers to:

- cope with change in the teaching climate;
- facilitate monitoring and recording a student's progress;
- open up the options for managing scarce resources;
- meet individual needs through differentiated learning activities;
- develop a wider range of skills competencies in their students.

Above all the Project allows those in the pilot schools time to focus on the role of the teacher as tutor in the management of the learning process. This means time for reflection, time for sharing expertise and experience and time for preparation.

What has been achieved so far?

The schemes outlined below give an indication of the impact of the Project on local institutions.

Collaboration between two schools on the production of materials to support the GCSE topic of Leisure, making use of satellite material, TELETEL, and compilation tapes.

The development of materials for Spanish using a Concept Keyboard with a BBC computer.

Pilot materials for integrated group work; this includes the production of a personal dossier for students who have used the project to research the potential for IT using word processing and authoring packages.

The development of strategies to exploit an electronic mail link with a twin school in Germany via German TELEBOX.

Exploitation of TELETEL as a source of authentic reading materials for low attainers in Years 10 and 11.

The use of German, French and Spanish Foreign Language Assistants as newscasters producing videos reporting on items retrieved from databases on Campus 2000; the students are involved in authentic tasks using the environment as the main issue for discussion.

Various adaptations of units from course books using a Supported Self Study approach.

The production of a study guide and assessment guide for one section of the York FLAW course.

The production of a French newspaper using 'Pagemaker' on the Apple Mac computer on the Newcastle Technology Bus; this involved market research within the local community and working to deadlines.

Further details about the Flexible Learning Project and progress in the participating schools are available from:

*Flexible Learning Centre NE
South Tyneside College
Mill Lane
Hebburn, NE31 2ER*

DEVELOPING READING IN BUSHFIELD SCHOOL

Ann Swarbrick

Advisory Teacher, Cambridgeshire

At Bushfield School we wanted all pupils to begin reading for pleasure in a foreign language after their first term with us. We wanted to build on the reading habit they had developed in the primary school as early as possible, but we couldn't find enough titles for that level of language. For this reason we invested in the Mary Glasgow Publications graded reading scheme *Bibliobus*. The stories have proved popular among our pupils and I am convinced that by the time an average reader has read through most of the levels he or she has a good enough grounding to feel capable of trying something more substantial.

The Modern Languages Department of the school is the heaviest user of the library. Every pupil spends a minimum of 30 minutes there every alternate week reading. This happens to be the most comfortable place in the school, which is a factor to be considered when people are reading for pleasure.

On arrival in the library each pupil finds their reading record card - a book list which indicates the books they have read and those they have still to read - and their reading diary. These live in the library and often form the basis of conversations between staff and pupils about the books. We have designed the reading diary primarily as a personal record of foreign language reading.

The sooner we make pupils aware of the range of clues and strategies they can employ to cope with unknown language, the more quickly they become comfortable with the written word. With

this in mind we added the 'Word Discovery' page to the back of the reading diaries. It is a personal vocabulary list which looks like this:

My Word Discoveries



	French Word	How I reached my conclusion					English Word
		It looked like English	Rest of sentence gave clue	I've heard it before	I asked someone	I looked it up	
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							

Once pupils have read through the three collections of *Bibliobus*, or have reached their tenth year, they move onto general reading. They are offered a selection of books and magazines chosen in France to suit their ages and tastes. Pupils must decide for themselves whether or not a book is too difficult, though we do give guidance and recommendations. At this stage they are issued with a new diary called *Mes Critiques* in which they complete book and magazine reviews.

Une critique d'un magazine



Nom du magazine

Prix

Hébdomadaire

A qui s'adresse-t-il ?

Que pensez-vous

de la présentation

de la qualité

des articles

Pouvez-vous

Pourquoi ? / Pourquoi pas ?

Titre:

INFORMATIONS

Auteur:

Je l'ai commencé le

Je l'ai terminé le

Un petit résumé en bref:

Je l'ai trouvé...

Ennuyeux	
Facile	
Mauvais	
Génial	
Intéressant	
Assez intéressant	
Très intéressant	
Difficile	
Superbe	
Touchant	
Lent	
Amusant	

et aussi...

Tragique

Comique

Romantique

Réalistique

Intellectuel

Passionnant

Sensationnel

et aussi...

There is also a German version of this diary.

Needless to say we encounter problems with slow readers and low attainers. These problems have been reduced considerably by using a support mechanism set up after discussions with the Special Needs Department. In the Lower School we try to encourage these pupils by:

- reading to them as they follow the book;
- allowing two readers to read the same book together;
- asking only for an oral account of the story;
- providing taped versions of the stories in *Bibliobus* for use with personal stereos;
- time-tabling a Special Needs support teacher for as many reading periods as possible.

We believe that our reading programme is of immense use to our pupils in allowing them the independence to acquire language for themselves. But it also must be said that we, as individuals, love reading. I end with my favourite quotation on the subject:

***Reading is like an infectious disease:
it is caught not taught.***

(And you can't catch it from someone who hasn't got it...)

Christine Nuttall,
Teaching reading skills in a foreign language.

APPENDIX I

Resource implications

Resourcing autonomous learning

Ann Swarbrick's article on reading provides a suitable lead into this brief section on resources, a theme which will be developed more fully at the CILT follow-up workshop. Reading is still regarded by many as a neglected skill, which makes her imaginative yet practical approach all the more welcome. Carefully structured and well informed support will help more youngsters to become less dependent on their teachers as the only providers of understanding. Indeed, reading is a wonderful way of keeping the learner in touch with the foreign language. Thus, one of the most important roles of the 'autonomous teacher' is to seek out texts which are pitched at the level of the learner and to devise, where appropriate, supportive tasks which are not too difficult to do. Success and confidence are the keywords. This, of course, implies an emphasis on the planning and preparation phases of the teaching cycle. Improvements in pupil attitude and performance are the outcome of what Judith Hamilton refers to as 'the pay-off for teachers' hard work' during these phases.

The resources produced by the learners themselves must command our attention and provide inspiration to others. Audio and video cassettes for a partner institution abroad; comparative surveys between classes; the production of a foreign language magazine; the writing of stories for different audiences - these, and many other 'real life' activities, are a celebration of pupil achievement which in turn become valuable resources to other learners.

Leni Dam's idea of keeping diaries, with their focus on evaluation, is an interesting one. Shortly after the Lane End conference, one teacher reported back enthusiastically on a diary scheme he had introduced to Year 11 students in response to problems posed by

the awkward gap between mock exams and Easter. On a voluntary basis, all but two of the students accepted responsibility for setting objectives with the teacher and their friends, for accurate record keeping, and for planning and reviewing. By so doing, they became more accountable for the work they had done and their motivation increased considerably.

With the rapid developments taking place in Information Technology and its various applications, teachers are witnessing greater possibilities for autonomous learning in the classroom. Some have indeed been surprised by 'low attainers' who have exceeded 'normal' expectations. It is true that the flexible use of computers and video require more sophisticated classroom and resource management, but the signs to date indicate enormous enthusiasm for applications such as the concept keyboard, databases, word processing and 'authoring packages.' Some content-free programs allow learners the freedom to work at their own pace, discuss language and solve problems together without reference to (or interference from) the teacher. They also appear to possess an in-built fascination factor which encourages learners to persist until a task is successfully completed. The concomitant freedom enjoyed by the teacher (assuming a carousel-type of classroom organisation) provides time for quick support and encouragement, for imaginative use of the foreign language assistant, for access to individual learning problems and for consultancy work. In other words, the way is paved to begin orchestrating the kind of learning and teaching styles which are in harmony with the concept of autonomy.

It is not the purpose of this publication to offer an exhaustive list of resources to support autonomous learning. There are, however, some excellent sources of reference for the teacher which combine to provide a good 'starter kit' of basic principles and ideas to try out. These are:

- CILT Pathfinder series:
 - *Recording progress*
 - *Reading for pleasure in a foreign language*
- Cambridge University Press Handbooks for Language Teachers:

Although designed primarily for EFL, these are a source of inspiration to any language teacher, and many of the ideas and activities can be adapted to good effect. They also contain very useful bibliographies.

- National Association of Languages Advisers

Equipping the modern languages department for the 1990s

This document sets out to establish priorities and to suggest guidelines for a coherent programme of departmental resourcing.

NALA Sales
19 High Street
Eccleshall
Stafford ST1 6BW

- National Council for Educational Technology

The NCET Modern Languages Project provides comprehensive information on all aspects of IT in modern languages, including recent developments in Supported Self Study and Special Educational Needs.

NCET
Sir William Lyons Road
University of Warwick
Science Park
Coventry CV4 7EZ

APPENDIX II

Conclusions of the conference discussion groups



TEACHING 11-16

Initial steps in inaugurating progress towards autonomy

Area	Action	Us	Others
AUTHORITY STAFF DEVELOPMENT	Ensure that all levels of government/governance/management are adequately informed of our aspirations and consequent needs. (HMG/DES/NCC/LEA/SMTI)	*	
	Put pressure on these bodies to make adequate material/INSET provision for implementation.		*
	Beware of cynical use of autonomous language learning as money-saver.	*	
	Follow up what we have become aware of: - by further theoretical study; - by observation of autonomy in other departments/phases (e.g. primary).	* *	
	Ask for follow-up courses to give us more active learning experiences.		*
	Beware of being blinded by the 'best thing since sliced bread' syndrome!	*	
	See that teacher trainers are circulated with our findings and encourage them to pass these on to trainees.	*	*
	Examine present departmental practice for growth points, to minimise innovators' culture shock and build on certainties.	*	

Area	Action	Us	Others
CURRICULUM CONSTRAINTS	Either		
	Involve those who want to take part in small scale pilot project with objectives, evaluation etc.	*	
	Or		
	Work independently on aspects of autonomous language learning (see 'growth points' above).		
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	Beware the myth of the herd innovator!		
	Be aware of those aspects of the National Curriculum which are compatible with autonomous language learning (e.g. continuous assessment)	*	
	and are inimical to autonomous language learning (e.g. controlled content and GCSE constraints)		
	Ensure that e.g. NCC Working Party is aware of our needs	*	*
	Examine existing resources.	*	*
	List desirable resources (e.g. tape copier, short cassettes).	*	
	Examine existing materials and adapt desirable ones to flexible learning.	*	
	Set up resource-sharing networks.	*	*
	Fight for time to prepare!	*	
	Hope that more self-access materials (without teacher guides) will be produced!	*	?

Opportunities for autonomy:

- pupils are more mature;
- 16 is a natural break in the education system;
- students often have the chance to embark on a new course;
- group sizes are likely to be smaller;
- relationships are likely to be more open;
- new and more practical courses allow greater scope for differentiation and thus cater for different needs and backgrounds.

What is needed:

- better liaison within and between departments;
 - an assurance that autonomy is not used as an excuse to cut staff;
 - staff autonomy - one cannot expect student autonomy if staff are working within a rigid, 'non-autonomous' structure;
 - negotiated staff time for preparation, INSET and curriculum development.
-

TEACHING THE LOW ACHIEVER

Contexts for learning

It seems that in a high proportion of lessons for lower attainers the relationship between pupils and teacher is strained and, in some cases, has completely broken down. Failure and low expectations breed stress in both teacher and learner, sometimes leading to a psychological impasse where the teacher 'dumps' his or her own feelings of inadequacy on the learners, and vice versa. Building on principles developed by active tutorial programmes could provide a bridge between the teacher and the demotivated pupils. Negotiation of the agenda for learning (e.g. themes for exploitation, choice in deciding the means of learning) has proved of considerable value. Examples of successful projects included:

- planning a storyboard/making a video of school life at home (for twin school abroad) with accompanying brochure;
- town trails and surveys with dossiers and photo-montage;
- designing a French cafe in a 'demountable' and putting it into operation in the target language;

- vocational simulations using the foreign language in this country - based on materials, ideas and visits to/from local shop keepers, office workers, leisure centre employees etc.

The contexts for learning extended outside the confines of the classroom and were certainly not restricted by the chapters of a text book.

Conclusions

There are no 'off the peg' solutions. However, much can be gained by:

- action research into the learning processes;
- observation of lessons;
- sharing ideas and producing case studies;
- listening to the learners.

Little can be achieved without:

- a full understanding of the nature of specific learning difficulties;
- appropriate teaching programmes;
- adequate resources;
- belief in the value of the individual.

Expanded notes by Bernardette Holmes

THE ROLE OF THE INSPECTORATE (LOCAL AND NATIONAL)

The main needs are to:

- raise awareness;
- reassure - it's not all new!
- maintain continuity with current teaching;
- inform and explain to others (parents/colleagues) and to promote dialogue across phases;
- concentrate on activities and skills which may be largely ignored (e.g. reading);
- focus on management, organisation and planning - resources serve these, not vice versa;

- monitor the effects of LMS;
 - assist teachers in identifying when effective learning and progression are taking place - there needs to be evidence of these if the approach is to be advocated;
 - recognise the need for inspectors/advisers to inform teachers of the criteria for monitoring.
-

ADVISING TEACHERS/INSET

The main objectives were to:

- build on existing practice, raising awareness and responding to teachers' needs;
 - present autonomy as something which is 'not new' but rather a strategy that might solve problems;
 - avoid using the word 'autonomy' and avoid other jargon!
 - exemplify principles of autonomous learning in INSET;
 - act as a link between senior management and the FL teacher and department;
 - form support groups (for the lonely enthusiast);
 - work towards creating the national coordination of information on current practice, practitioners, schemes and INSET materials, specific to modern languages;
 - establish a national forum for advisory teachers and INSET leaders;
 - compile a video of CILT conference videos as well as a professional video of autonomous learning practice.
-

FINDING THE RESOURCES

Resources are essential, but concern over future (and continuation of existing) sources was paramount. The introduction of LMS is seen as threatening the future of existing initiatives and inhibiting new developments.

Losses through the introduction of LMS

Loss of centralised resources

- a) Teachers' Centres
- b) Development Centres
- c) Working Parties

Loss of centralisation will lead to stultification of initiatives and progression

LMS

Loss of free LEA resources

- a) Advisory Teachers
- b) Ideas
- c) Materials

Inhibit cross-fertilisation of ideas due to inter-school market competition

LEAs would need to demonstrate their skill in managing consortia, otherwise infighting could occur.

The benefits of collaboration and cooperative working parties need encouragement.

There should be more effective nationwide communication of information, ideas and materials (through NERIS, CILT, NCET, 'ALL?')

TEACHING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Main points:

- changing the minds of one's college or university department of education;
- insisting on a basic minimum of teaching time;
- improving status (and hence the resources);
- developing in manageable steps.

With regard to teacher training:

- students need to be responsible for their own learning and learn how to create an 'autonomous classroom';

- liaison with LEAs and advisers is needed to develop good practice in schools, thereby creating good environments for school experience.

There is also a need for greater networking; e.g. ERASMUS and HE.



THE CILT AUTONOMOUSE

FURTHER READING

1. AFLS/SUFLRA Joint Conference. London, 1986.

The advanced language learner: papers of the Joint Conference held at the Roehampton Institute, London in April 1986: edited with an introduction by James A. Coleman and Richard Towell. Published by the Association for French Language Studies and the Scottish Universities' French Language Research Association, in association with CILT, 1987. ISBN 0 948003 17 0.

2. ALTMAN, Howard P and C Vaughan James, eds.

Foreign language teaching: meeting individual needs: papers from the first Pergamon Institute of English Seminar. Oxford: Pergamon, 1980. ISBN 0 08 024604 4.

3. COUNCIL OF EUROPE. Council for Cultural Co-operation. Modern Languages Project.

Ateliers internationaux pour les formateurs d'enseignants de langues vivantes. (Reports available free):

Rapport de l'atelier 7a, 1984. 'Le centre d'apprentissage multi-média et le développement de l'autonomie chez l'apprenant'. Strasbourg, 1985. (CC-GP 12 (84) Atelier 7a. Français seulement). Eurocentre Lausanne, Suisse, 18-22 juin 1984. Rapport par Brigitte Suter.

Rapport de l'atelier 9, 1986. 'Apprentissage du français aux fins de communication dans le cadre scolaire: techniques nouvelles visant la communication et favorisant l'autonomie de l'apprenant'. Strasbourg, 1988. (CC-GP 12 (86) Atelier 9. Français seulement). Collège d'Europe, Bruges, Belgium, 20-24 octobre 1986. Rapport par Roland Devreker.

Rapport de l'atelier 10, 1986. 'Le développement de l'autonomie chez les élèves apprenant l'allemand dans l'enseignement secondaire

(élèves de 11 à 19 ans)'. Strasbourg 1987. (CC-GP 12 (86) Atelier 10. Français seulement). Charbonnières-les-Bains, France, 20-24 octobre 1986. Rapport par Claude Hullard.

Autonomy and foreign language learning. By Henri Holec. Pergamon, 1981. (Strasbourg, 1979). ISBN 0 08 025357 1.

Autonomie et apprentissage en langues étrangères. Paris: Hatier, 1982. ISBN 2 218 06033 7.

An account of the principles of self-directed learning and of experiments carried out in four centres.

Autonomy and self-directed learning: present fields of application/Autonomie et apprentissage autodirigé: terrains d'application actuels.

Compendium of reports compiled by Henri Holec. Strasbourg, 1988. Papers in English or French. ISBN 92 871 1531 1.

Approaches to self-assessment in foreign language learning. By Mats Oskarsson. Pergamon, 1980. (Strasbourg, 1978).

ISBN 0 08 024594 3.

An outline of possible forms of guided self-assessment in foreign language learning, review of research and practice in a number of countries and suggestions for materials and their use.

Self-assessment of foreign language skills: a survey of research and development work. By Mats Oskarsson. Strasbourg, 1984.

ISBN 92 871 0358 5.

Thirteen pieces of research are reviewed, four of which focus on work on continuous assessment. Attention is on adult learning and on procedures and results that are judged to be of general interest. Various types of materials that have been used for self-assessment purposes are illustrated.

[NOTE: Council of Europe publications address: BP 431 R6, F67006 Strasbourg, or its Sales Agents (e.g. HMSO in the UK). Work published by other publishers (e.g. Pergamon) can be ordered from the publishers or booksellers, but **not** from Strasbourg].

4. DICKINSON, Leslie

Self-instruction in language learning. Cambridge University Press, 1987. ISBN 0 521 26600 9 (hbk). ISBN 0 521 31967 6 (pbk).

Describes through a series of case studies the advantages of various forms of self-instruction, and looks at practical issues. Examples of materials,

activities and testing techniques. Focuses on the adult learner, but the principles outlined are equally valid for school-aged language learners.

5. HUTTUNEN, Irma

Towards learner autonomy in foreign language learning in senior secondary school. Oulu, Finland: Department of Teacher Education (Oulu), University of Oulu, 1986. (Acta Univ. Oul. Series E. Paedag 3). ISBN 951 42 2134 6. ISSN 0355 323 X. Dissertation presented at the University of Oulu, 1986.

6. LITTLE, David, ed.

Self-access systems for language learning: a practical guide. Published by Authentik in association with CILT, 1989. ISBN 0 948003 38 3.

This book is the outcome of a research project between the Centre for Language and Communication Studies, Trinity College, Dublin; the Centre de Recherches et d'Applications Pédagogiques en Langues, Univ. de Nancy II; and the Department of Linguistics, University of Cambridge. Contributions from D Little and David Singleton (Dublin); Edith Esch (Cambridge); Philip Riley, Marie-José Gremmo and Harvey Moulden (Nancy).

7. NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY

Supported self-study. London: NCET, January 1989. (Information 12). 14-page booklet. Free.

Supported self-study in secondary education. By Philip Waterhouse. NCET, 1983. ISBN 0 86184 112 3.

Deals with the philosophical, managerial and administrative problems.

Supported self-study: an introduction for teachers. By Philip Waterhouse. NCET, 1988. ISBN 0 86184 177 8. Deals mainly with setting up a trial scheme within a school.

8. SHEERIN, Susan

Self-access. Oxford University Press, 1989. ISBN 0 19 437099 2.

Designed to help EFL and ESL teachers with the practicalities involved in setting up and managing self-access study facilities.

The concept of autonomous learning in our schools and colleges is nothing new, yet it is likely to be a major issue of the 1990s and beyond. Many initiatives have had promising starts but have failed to become deep-rooted for one reason or another.

This collection of papers should provide considerable practical help to those who wish to embark on a more autonomous approach or who are seeking to strengthen existing practice.

ISBN 0 948003 14 6

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